

SENATE BILL 525

NEVADA EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (ECE) PROGRAM

2005-06
Evaluation Report



NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Special Education, Elementary and Secondary Education, and School Improvement
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Executive Summary

The 2005 Nevada State Legislature passed Senate Bill (SB) 525 that continued the funding of the Nevada Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program and appropriated \$3,032,172 in the 2005-06 fiscal year and \$3,152,479 in the 2006-2007 fiscal year for early childhood education. The money must be used by the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) to award competitive grants to school districts and community-based organizations for early childhood education programs. According to SB 525, the grants are “to initiate or expand pre-kindergarten education programs.” In addition, the grants must have a parenting component, as specified in the original legislation for the Nevada ECE Program. Families are eligible for the program if they have a child up to the age the child is eligible to attend kindergarten.

In July 2005, NDE awarded a competitive grant to 10 school districts and community-based organizations to operate an early childhood education program based on the recommendations of peer reviewers. Eight of the successful applications are school districts, including Carson City, Churchill County, Clark County, Douglas County, Humboldt County, Pershing County, Washoe County, and White Pine. The two remaining applications were Great Basin Community College in Elko and the Classroom on Wheels Program which operates three programs in four counties.

During 2005-06, the ten Nevada ECE projects provided services to 1,093 families at 41 different sites, including 1,125 children and 1,128 adults. Of the 1,125 children served in Nevada ECE during the 2005-06 school year, 973 children were in the Nevada ECE program on December 15, 2005. Using the figures of 973 children and the total award amount of \$3,032,172, the average cost of the Nevada ECE program per child in 2005-06 was \$3,116. This per child cost underestimates the total cost of providing an early childhood education program to children since the calculation does not include the monies from all the funding streams that support Nevada ECE project sites. That is, some Nevada ECE projects are funded with both Nevada ECE funds as well as other funds.

The purposes of this report are to describe the Nevada ECE projects and populations they served and to report the results of data collected on four program outcome indicators in

early childhood education and parenting. The evaluation addressed five major questions:

1. How is the funding spent on the program?
2. Who is served by the program?
3. How do projects implement Early Childhood Education?
4. What are the outcomes of Early Childhood Education?
5. Does the Nevada Early Childhood Education Program have a longitudinal impact on the program children and parents? (The results to this question are presented separately in *Nevada Early Childhood Education Program 2005-06 Longitudinal Evaluation Report* available at the Nevada Department of Education.)

The remainder of the executive summary is divided into key sections of the evaluation, followed by a set of key findings and conclusions from the evaluation. Many of the findings in this evaluation report are consistent with the findings from the 2004-05 evaluation report.

Nevada ECE Participants. The profile of Nevada ECE families is that many have provided their children with limited formal educational experiences prior to the program, are from minority ethnic backgrounds, are English Language Learners, and a sizeable number of families are poor. For many families, Nevada ECE gives them an important opportunity to better their lives by providing their children with developmentally supportive experiences to prepare them for school.

Adults cited two primary reasons for participating in Nevada ECE: to better prepare their child for school and to improve their child's chance of success in school.

The primary reasons families participated in Nevada Early Childhood Education were to better prepare their child for school and to improve their child's future success in school.

Nevada ECE served families with a large range of incomes; however, the largest portion of families represents the poorer segment of the population. Thirty-six percent of Nevada ECE families (393 families) have incomes under \$20,000.

Most Nevada ECE children (866 children or 77 percent) did not participate in any educational program before participating in Nevada ECE, and 85 percent (952 children) did not participate in any other educational program while enrolled in Nevada ECE.

When asked what would Nevada ECE children do if they did not participate in the early childhood education program, parents reported the vast majority of children (1,006 children or 89%) would spend all or a part of the time at home—either with their parents (65 percent), grandparents or other adult family member (17 percent), or with siblings (8 percent). About 21 percent of the children (240 children) would spend all or a part of their time in a structured or semi-structured early childhood setting. In other words, the majority of children would not attend any structured or semi-structured early childhood education program prior to entering kindergarten without Nevada ECE.

Most children would have stayed at home with their parents, grandparents, siblings, or other family member if they did not participate in Nevada ECE.

The typical Nevada ECE family included two parents—representing 77 percent of families (835 families). Single parents headed 91 families (8 percent).

The adult Nevada ECE population is primarily female: 1,008 females (89 percent) vs. 120 males (11 percent). Most adult participants are between 20 to 29 years of age (534 adults or 48 percent) or between 30 to 39 years old (462 adults or 42 percent). The Nevada ECE adult population also included a small number of teen parents (7 adults or 1 percent). The ethnic composition of Nevada ECE adults is primarily Hispanic (675 adults or 60 percent) and White (356 adults or 32 percent). Fifty-one percent of Nevada ECE adults (573 adults) speak Spanish as their primary language and 46 percent (524 adults) speak English.

Overall, Nevada ECE projects served children three and four years old. Like their parents, Nevada ECE children represent several ethnic groups, with Hispanic (59 percent) and White (27 percent) representing the largest groups. Forty-three percent of Nevada ECE children (488 children) are Limited English Proficient.

Nevada ECE Program Development. One way to help develop a quality early childhood program is to draw upon effective or established programs and practices when planning program activities. As mentioned previously, Nevada ECE funded 10 projects that operated 41 sites. The evaluation visited 13 of the 41 sites, with at least one site from each of the 10 projects. All 13 sites used commercial early childhood education programs

as their primary curriculum: several sites used multiple commercial programs. Many of the programs are based on reading research: five sites used *High Scope*, three sites used the *Creative Curriculum*, and three sites used the Scholastic's *Building Language for Literacy*. Single sites used *Curiosity Corner* or *PreSchool Core Knowledge Curriculum*.

Nevada ECE Program Implementation. Nevada ECE funds purchased the services of 89 staff, for a total of 69.6 FTE. The 89 staff included six administrators, 36 teachers, 34 teacher aides, two family specialists, nine support staff, and two “other staff.”

Of the 36 teachers in the Nevada ECE program, 31 teachers (86 percent) meet state requirements for instruction of pre-kindergarten children. Twenty-nine of these 31 teachers (94 percent) have an early childhood education certificate and/or endorsement. The remaining two of the 31 teachers have an elementary teaching certificate and were employed full time in a pre-kindergarten program as of July 1, 2002, and thus, meet state requirements. In other words, most teachers in the program have specific training and/or experience in early childhood education.

The five of the 36 instructors who do not meet the criteria of the state requirements for instruction of pre-kindergarten children have worked in the early childhood education program at Classroom on Wheels for several years. To enable these staff to continue their job status, after the new state requirements went into effect in July 2002, these five staff were “grand-fathered in” to the state requirements.

The instructors and aides received some training during 2005-06. Overall, projects provided teachers and aides with the most hours of training in *Curriculum* and *Developmental Areas*—to help staff learn early childhood education best practices as well as the curriculum models implemented at the projects. Staff received the least amount of training in *Children with special needs*, perhaps because many projects did not serve children with special needs.

Intensity of Services Offered. The number of service hours that Nevada ECE projects offer to program participants is an important variable in determining the potential impact of the program. The more hours of service offered typically result in the more

hours of service attended—increasing the likelihood the program would impact participants positively.

Projects offered an average of 9 to 10 months of service in early childhood education and an average of 9 to 10 months of service in parenting education during 2005-06. On average, projects offered between 431 and 437 hours of early childhood education for 2005-06, depending upon the age of the child. The 10 projects scheduled three to four year olds an average of 437 hours and four to five year olds an average of 431 hours.

Projects offered an average of 102 hours of parenting education during 2005-06, which includes 77 hours of parent and child activities and 25 hours of parenting education alone.

All projects used a variety of strategies to involve parents in the program. All 10 projects provided opportunities for parent and child together activities and opportunities for parents to volunteer in the classroom.

Levels of Participation. It is important to distinguish between services offered by projects and participation in services. Nevada ECE children participated in early childhood education services an average of 264 hours, which is an increase from the total average hours of 220 reported in 2004-05 and similar to the 267 hours reported in 2003-04.

Overall, Nevada ECE adults participated in an average of 15.8 hours in parenting education during the program, less than the 19.3 hours reported in 2004-05 and the 21.3 hours reported in 2003-04.

A key reason why the average hours of participation for early childhood education and parenting are less than the average hours of services offered is that many ECE children and adults did not participate for the entire program year.

Retention and Reasons for Leaving. Nevada ECE projects retained the majority of families in the program. Eighty-four percent of Nevada ECE families (915 of 1,093 families) who enrolled in the program during 2005-06 were still in the program at the end of the school year. For comparison, 87 percent of families who enrolled in the Nevada ECE during 2003-04 and 2004-05 were still in the program at the end of the school year.

Overall, the families who were in the Nevada ECE program during 2005-06 spent an average of 8.9 months in the program, slightly less than the 9.1 months 2004-05.

Of the 178 families who left the program, the most common reason why families exited was that the family moved out of the area served by the ECE project (69 families or 39 percent). The next most common reason was that the family was dropped due to incomplete participation or poor attendance (12 families or 7 percent).

Program Delivery Indicators. Based on ratings by an Early Childhood Education Evaluator, the projects scored relatively high on 17 sub-indicators—from an average of 4.0 to 5.0 on a five-point scale. *Initial Assessment* and *Reading Readiness* had the highest ratings at 5.0. The indicator, *Initial Assessment*, refers to the use of a variety of formal and informal assessment techniques to measure domains of learning and development and to guide instruction. The indicator, *Reading Readiness*, refers to how projects encourage parents and caregivers to regularly read with children and to become actively involved in the reading experience. Nevada ECE projects scored high on these two indicators because all the projects use a variety of assessments to determine what children know in different early childhood domains. In addition, all projects are required to develop and implement parenting components that encourage parents to spend time with their children, especially in reading activities.

The evaluation also compared ratings from 2005-06 with ratings from the previous four years. Overall, the data shows that Nevada ECE projects showed an increase in the average ratings from 2001-02 to 2005-06 on 16 of the 17 indicators. Only one indicator, *Environment*, did not increase: this rating remained the same primarily because of continuing concerns over the lack of appropriate playground equipment and safety issues at a couple projects.

The results also show that 14 of the 17 indicators increased 2004-05 to 2005-06. Of the three indicators that did not increase over this time period, two remained the same and only one decreased. The indicator that decreased is due primarily to one project which had a new teacher who had not yet been trained on the early childhood education model used in the classroom.

Educational and Developmental Outcomes of Nevada ECE. The primary purpose of the state evaluation is accountability—to relate program participation in Nevada ECE to outcomes for children and adults. The evaluation investigated the performance of children and adults on four outcome indicators: one indicator in early childhood education and three indicators in parenting.


In early childhood education, Nevada ECE children met the expected performance level on assessments measuring receptive vocabulary and expressive communication.

In parenting skills, Nevada ECE adults exceeded the expected performance levels on all three indicators. ECE adults exceeded the expected performance level for achieving at least one parenting goal, increasing the amount of time they spent with their children in meaningful interactions, and increasing the amount of time they spent reading with their children.










Conclusions.



The 2005-06 school year is the fifth year of the Nevada Early Childhood Education Program. This evaluation report presents data on participant characteristics (e.g., age, ethnicity, family structure), project operations (e.g., staffing, intensity of services offered), ratings of the services provided by Nevada ECE projects based on program delivery indicators of effective early childhood programs, and data on child and adult outcomes.

The two overall conclusions about the 2005-06 Nevada ECE program are: Nevada ECE projects have improved the quality of their early childhood programs since 2001-02 when the Nevada ECE program began and Nevada ECE projects have positively impacted program participants in early childhood development and parenting skills. Other conclusions and key statements about the Nevada ECE program include—

-  Nevada ECE projects have implemented higher quality early childhood programs from 2001-02 to 2005-06 based on increases in the average ratings of 16 of 17 program delivery indicators of effective early childhood programs. In addition, the overall quality of the early childhood education programs increased slightly from 2004-05 to 2005-06 based on an increase in the average ratings for 14 of the 17 program delivery indicators. Only one indicator decreased due primarily to one project which had a new teacher who had not yet been trained on the early childhood

education model used in the classroom. The ratings of the other two indicators remained the same.

-  All Nevada ECE projects are helping to improve adult's parenting skills and children's language development and school readiness skills. Nevada ECE projects showed gains on all child and adult measures and exceeded the expected performance levels on all four statewide outcome indicators used for family literacy programs.
-  Nevada ECE children, including children learning the English language, are more likely to succeed in kindergarten because of their participation in the program.
-  Projects recruited many families who were in need and could benefit from the Nevada ECE program. Many families had multiple economic and social disadvantages (e.g., limited educational experience, limited English proficiency). At enrollment, most Nevada ECE children started below their peers on a measure of school readiness.
-  For many families, Nevada ECE was the only structured opportunity to better prepare their children for school. Most children from Nevada ECE families did not participate in any preschool or toddler program before Nevada ECE and many Nevada ECE children did not participate in any other program while in Nevada ECE.
-  The vast majority of children would have stayed at home with their parents, grandparents, siblings, or other family member for all or part of the time if they did not participate in Nevada ECE.
-  The majority of early childhood education teachers (86 percent) meet new state requirements for teaching pre-kindergarten children. The teachers who do not meet the criteria of the new state requirements were 'grandfathered in' due to their previous experience and employment in existing early childhood programs. Of the qualified teachers, most (94 percent) have an early childhood education certificate or endorsement.
-  The average cost for providing the Nevada Early Childhood Education Program in 2005-06 was \$3,116 per child. This per child cost underestimates the total per child cost for providing an early childhood education program to children since the calculation does not include the monies from all the funding streams that support Nevada ECE project sites.
-  Projects offered services in early childhood education of sufficient intensity and duration, which if attended regularly, would positively impact Nevada ECE children.
-  Most children attended services in early childhood education at a level which could show positive benefits of the services they received. However, some children who were enrolled in the program long enough, did not attend services frequently enough to benefit substantially from them.

-  Most parents attended Nevada ECE parenting education services regularly enough to benefit. However, some parents were not in the program long enough or did not attend services frequently enough to benefit substantially from them.
-  Projects retained 84 percent of families enrolled in Nevada ECE during 2005-06 until the end of the school year, slightly less than the 87 percent who completed the program in both the 2003-04 and 2004-05 school years.

Although Nevada ECE projects have established sound early childhood education programs, Nevada ECE projects can still improve the services they provide to families. Below are four recommendations for improvement.

1. Continue to adopt, implement, and provide training to staff in high-quality, research-based early childhood programs and practices. Train all staff in Nevada Pre-kindergarten Content Standards.
2. Monitor children's attendance in the early childhood education program and develop policies to replace those children who are unable to attend frequently with children who are more likely to attend.
3. Whenever possible, ensure early childhood classrooms have or have use of an outdoor playground with equipment for pre-kindergarten children to provide an outdoor curriculum that improves gross motor development.
4. In classes that are predominantly English Language Learners, research and implement practices that are a good fit with program and children characteristics to facilitate the learning of English.

The Nevada Department of Education can help projects meet their goals by considering three recommendations.

1. Continue to locate and provide technical assistance and training in high-quality early childhood education programs and practices, including information and training in the Nevada Pre-kindergarten Content Standards.
2. Continue to monitor project activities to ensure high-quality early childhood education projects based on the 17 program delivery indicators for effective early childhood education programs.
3. Continue to work with projects to improve services in the 17 program delivery indicators by having projects develop improvement plans for those indicators in which projects were rated low.
4. Continue to monitor data collection for the statewide evaluation.

Chapter I. Introduction

The 2005 Nevada State Legislature passed Senate Bill (SB) 525 that appropriated \$3,032,172 in the 2005-06 fiscal year and \$3,152,479 in the 2006-2007 fiscal year for early childhood education.¹ According to SB 525, the grants are “to initiate or expand pre-kindergarten education programs” that are consistent with “*August 2000 Public Support for Prekindergarten Education For School Readiness in Nevada*” —a publication from NDE. The publication identifies a list of features that contribute to an educational setting in which a child can receive high-quality early care and education. The grants must also have a parenting component as specified in the original legislation for the Nevada Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program.

In July 2005, NDE announced a competitive process to select the school districts and community-based organizations to operate the early childhood education programs. To qualify for funding, applicants had to already operate a Nevada ECE program and provide a detailed description of the proposed early childhood education program, the proposed parenting program, and how the money would be used to supplement and not supplant money that would otherwise be expended for early childhood education programs.

NDE received applications from the 10 school districts and community-based organizations that operated a Nevada ECE project in the 2003-05 biennium. A panel of peer reviewers judged the 10 applications using criteria developed for the program. Eight of the successful applications are school districts, including Carson City, Churchill County, Clark County, Douglas County, Humboldt County, Pershing County, Washoe County, and White Pine. The two remaining application were from Great Basin Community College in Elko and Classroom on Wheels Program.

Table 1 shows the ten early childhood education projects, the amount of funds each project received in 2005-06, and the number of early childhood education sites by project.²

¹ The 2001 Nevada State Legislature funded Nevada Early Childhood Education with \$3.5 million.

² Four projects supported early childhood education programs at more than one site.

All together, the ten Nevada ECE projects funded under SB 525 supported 41 early childhood sites which served 1,125 children during the 2005-06 school year.

Table 1. The 2005-06 Monetary Awards and Number of Early Childhood Education Sites

Nevada ECE Project	Monetary Award	Number of Sites
Carson City School District	\$230,000	2
Churchill County School District	\$115,000	1
Clark County School District	\$1,300,000	11
Classroom on Wheels (COW)	\$315,000	13
Douglas County School District	\$80,000	1
Great Basin College	\$115,000	1
Humboldt County School District	\$178,500	1
Pershing County School District	\$115,000	1
Washoe County School District	\$470,000	9
White Pine County School District	\$113,672	1
Total	\$3,032,172	41

According to SB 525, projects can use the funds “to initiate or expand pre-kindergarten education programs.” For the purposes of the evaluation, ‘initiate’ is defined as starting a new pre-kindergarten program where one did not exist previously, serving new children, based on when the Nevada ECE Program originally started in 2001.³ ‘Expand’ is defined as adding a new classroom to an existing pre-kindergarten program, which then serves new children, or improving the services offered to children at existing pre-kindergarten programs, such as by providing more staff or new materials. Table 2 shows the number of sites that projects initiated or expanded during 2005-06. The 10 projects initiated 26 pre-kindergarten sites and expanded services at 15 existing pre-kindergarten sites.

Of the 1,125 children served in Nevada ECE during the 2005-06 school year, 973 children were in the Nevada ECE program on December 15, 2005. Using the figures of 973 children and the total award amount of \$3,032,172, the average cost of the Nevada

³ For Classroom on Wheels, the definitions are based on when the program originally received funds from the Nevada State Legislature in 1999

ECE program was \$3,116 per child slightly less the \$3,292 per child cost in 2004-05.

This per child cost is an estimate of the total per child cost of providing an early childhood education experience since the calculation includes both children from project sites fully funded by Nevada ECE and children from project sites funded by multiple sources. To determine a precise per child cost for providing an early childhood education experience funded in whole or part by Nevada ECE, the evaluation would have to collect budget information from all the funding streams that support children from project sites partially funded under Nevada ECE. As a result, the \$3,116 per child figure underestimates the actual per child cost for early childhood education because it does not include the monies from all the funding streams for project sites only partially funded by Nevada ECE. For comparison, the average per child cost for participation in the national Head Start program is \$6,934 for FY 2002.

Table 2. The Number of Initiated and Expanded Early Childhood Education Sites

Nevada ECE Project	Initiated	Expanded
Carson City School District	1	1
Churchill County School District	1	
Clark County School District	6	5
Classroom on Wheels	7	6
Douglas County School District	1	
Great Basin College		1
Humboldt County School District	1	
Pershing County School District	1	
Washoe County School District	7	2
White Pine County School District	1	
Total	26	15

Organization of Report

Following this chapter, *Chapter II: Early Childhood Education Evaluation* describes the components of the statewide evaluation of Nevada ECE. *Chapter III: Early Childhood Education Program Implementation* provides additional project level information about

the administrative context of Nevada ECE projects including staffing patterns, professional qualifications, and inservice training. *Chapter IV: Early Childhood Education Participant Characteristics* presents descriptive information of Nevada ECE families, children, and adults. *Chapter V: Early Childhood Education Services* describes the educational services that projects offer to participating families. The next chapter, *Chapter VI: Participation in Services* reports on children and adult participation in program services. This chapter helps distinguish between the services that projects offer and the extent to which the families participate in services. *Chapter VII: Early Childhood Education Project Descriptions* presents a rating of each project on program delivery indicators for early childhood education programs and a description of the project. *Chapter VIII: Participant Outcomes* presents data on the educational progress of program participants. *Chapter IX: Testimonials* provides a description written by Nevada ECE families of the benefits they received from participation. Finally, *Chapter X: Conclusions and Recommendations* presents the conclusions of Nevada ECE implementation based on the results reported in all previous chapters of this report.

Chapter II. Early Childhood Education Evaluation

Senate Bill 525, Section 14 identifies specific evaluation requirements for early childhood education programs funded under the legislation. (See subsections 5, 6, and 7 of SB 525 in Appendix A.) Essentially, the three key components of the evaluation are:

- ♦ a description of the programs of early childhood education,
- ♦ a summary of the data showing the effectiveness on indicators of early childhood education and parenting, and
- ♦ a longitudinal comparison of the data showing the effectiveness of different programs.

This report, the Nevada Early Childhood Education Evaluation Report 2005-06, presents data on two of the three elements of the evaluation: project descriptions and a summary of the data showing the effectiveness on indicators of early childhood education and parenting. Data on the third evaluation component (a longitudinal comparison of the data showing the effectiveness of different programs) is presented in a separate report, *Nevada Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program 2005-06 Longitudinal Evaluation Report*, on children who participated in the Nevada ECE program in 2003-04 and enrolled in grade 1 in 2005-06 and on children who participated in the Nevada ECE program in 2004-05 and enrolled in kindergarten in 2005-06.

The Nevada Department of Education established an Early Childhood Education Evaluation Design Team in summer 2005 to develop an evaluation design consistent with the evaluation requirements outlined in SB 525. The Evaluation Design Team identified five primary research questions to guide a statewide evaluation of the early childhood education program.⁴

1. How is the funding spent on the program?

⁴ In addition to the statewide evaluation, projects must also participate in program monitoring activities. Program monitoring involves two parts. Local projects must submit a mid-year and an end-of-year progress report to the state Early Childhood Education Coordinator to describe progress toward meeting program objectives and in implementing the strategies to meet the objectives as outlined in the project application. In addition, the state Early Childhood Education Coordinator conducted site visits to determine project compliance with program requirements.

2. Who is served by the program?
3. How do projects implement Early Childhood Education?
4. What are the annual outcomes of Early Childhood Education?
5. Does the Nevada Early Childhood Education Program have a longitudinal impact on the children and parents it serves?

The five research questions are based on information requested by the Nevada Legislature and questions of interest to NDE, drawing from previous evaluations of the Nevada ECE and Even Start program. The five primary research questions are restated below—followed by sub-questions. Together, these questions and sub-questions guided data collection for the statewide evaluation.

Research Question # 1. *How is the funding spent on the program?*

This research question addresses the concern of how program dollars are used at the local level. It provides both program-level and project-level data on the amount of state expenditures on ECE. The specific sub-questions in this research area are listed below.

- ◆ How many ECE grants were awarded and to which organizations? What are the funding levels for ECE projects?
- ◆ How many ECE sites did each recipient operate?
- ◆ Were ECE grants used to initiate or expand early childhood education programs?
- ◆ What is the average cost of the program per participant?

Research Question # 2. *Who is served by the program?*

A concern of the Nevada Legislature is to describe the people who participate in ECE. This research question addresses the legislature's concern by focusing on the participants. Specific sub-questions to be addressed under this primary research question are listed below.

- ◆ How many families, children, and adults participate in ECE? What are the characteristics of families participating in ECE, e.g., family structure, income level?
- ◆ What are the background characteristics of the children and their parents who participate in ECE (e.g., gender, age, race/ethnicity, and primary language)?

- ◆ What is the educational history of ECE children?
- ◆ How long (how many months) do children and adults participate in ECE? How many families leave the ECE program before the end of the school year?

Research Question # 3. *How do projects implement Early Childhood Education?*

This question focuses on a range of implementation issues. An important issue is to determine what services are provided in early childhood education and the quality of those services. The specific sub-questions in this research area are listed below.

- ◆ What is the nature of services in early childhood education and parenting education offered by the projects? What activities, if any, do projects offer for parents and children together?
- ◆ How do ECE projects implement key components of early childhood education and parenting education services?
- ◆ How well do projects implement quality indicators of program delivery for early childhood education programs based on *Nevada Family Literacy Programs—Quality Indicators for Program Delivery*?
- ◆ What is the educational background of ECE staff? What kinds of continued training have ECE staff received to implement the early childhood education project effectively?
- ◆ On average, what is the intensity (hours) of the services *provided* in early childhood education and parenting education?
- ◆ To what extent do children *participate* in early childhood education and to what extent do adults *participate* in parenting education services?

Research Question # 4. *What are the annual outcomes of Early Childhood Education?*

This set of research questions is designed to address the annual impact of the program on early childhood education and parent involvement measures. The specific sub-questions in this research area are listed below.

- ◆ What gains are observed for ECE children on measures of developmental progress?
- ◆ What gains are observed for ECE adults on measures of parenting skills, including parenting goals, parent and child together time, and reading time with the child?

Research Question # 5. *Does the Nevada Early Childhood Education Program have a longitudinal impact on the children and parents it serves?*

This set of research questions is designed to address the longitudinal impact of the program on children and adults. The specific sub-questions in this research area are listed below.

- ◆ What longitudinal gains are observed for ECE children on measures of developmental progress?
- ◆ What longitudinal gains are observed for ECE adults on measures of parent involvement?

As mentioned previously, the results to the longitudinal evaluation are presented in a separate evaluation report, *Nevada Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program 2005-06 Longitudinal Evaluation Report*.

Chapter III. Early Childhood Education Implementation

This chapter presents a first look at the Nevada ECE projects and how they are implemented by examining their administrative and operational issues. The chapter examines staffing patterns, professional qualifications, and inservice training.

Staffing Patterns

Project directors were asked to report the number of paid Nevada ECE staff and their full-time equivalents (FTE) or whether they were paid on contract. To avoid duplicating staff counts, we asked project directors to count each staff member only once according to his or her primary assignment area even though staff members may perform multiple roles and functions. Table 3 presents the number of staff across all 10 projects at the end of the project year, their FTE, and the number of these staff on contract.

Table 3. The number of Nevada ECE staff by position

Position	Number of Staff	FTE of Staff	Number on Contract
Administrators	6	2.9	-
Teachers	36	31.9	-
Aides (educational assistant)	34	29.0	1
Family Specialists (home-visitor/advocate)	2	1.6	-
Support Staff (secretary, clerk)	9	2.7	-
Others	2	1.5	-
TOTAL STAFF	89	69.6	1

Nevada ECE program funds purchased the services of 89 staff for 2005-06, many of whom are part-time or funded part-time with Nevada ECE funds. The 89 staff included six administrators⁵ who managed the program at the project sites; 36 teachers who conducted the early childhood education programs; 34 teacher aides who assisted in the

⁵ Although all 10 projects have an administrator, Early Childhood Education funds were used to pay a portion of the salary of seven administrators.

early childhood program; two family specialists who worked primarily on parenting activities, including home visits; nine support staff, such as a secretary or clerk; and two “other staff” which included a teacher on special assignment who helped coordinate the program and a bus driver. One staff member, an educational assistant was paid “on contract.”

Professional Qualifications

Project directors reported the qualifications of their administrative and educational staff (teachers and aides) in terms of their highest level of education and years of professional experience in their position. For teachers, the evaluation also collected data on the type of teacher license/certificate and endorsement. Data on the type of certificate and endorsement held by the early childhood teachers are important because of state requirements regarding teachers in early childhood education programs. According to state law, a teacher must hold a special license or endorsement in early childhood education to teach in a program of instruction for pre-kindergarten children.⁶ The law does not apply to a teacher who holds an elementary license, is employed full time in a prekindergarten program as of July 1, 2002, and continues to teach full time in a prekindergarten program after July 1, 2002.

Table 4 shows the highest level of education attained for Nevada ECE administrators, teachers, aides or para-professionals, and family specialists. Although there is no specific required education level for administrators, five of the six administrators have at least a four-year college degree. One administrator has a two-year college degree.

Of the 36 teachers, 10 have a Master’s degree, 21 have a Bachelor’s degree, three have an Associate’s degree, and two have a high school diploma or GED.

Of the 34 aides, two have a Bachelor’s degree, 10 have an Associate’s degree, and 22 have a high school diploma/GED. There are two family specialists: both have a high school diploma/GED.

⁶ See Nevada Revised Statutes 391.019 and Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) 391.087 for the complete list of qualifications, provisions, and exceptions for the revised law.

Table 4 also shows that Nevada ECE instructors and administrators had more experience than other Nevada ECE staff. Five of the six administrators (83 percent) have over 10 years experience. Of the 36 teachers, six (17 percent) had more than 10 years of experience. Of the 36 aides and six family specialists, five (14 percent) had more than 10 years of experience.

Table 4. Highest Level of Education and Experience of Nevada ECE Project Staff

	Adminis- trators	Teachers	Aides	Family Specialists
Highest Level of Education				
Did not complete diploma/GED	0	0	0	0
High school diploma or GED	0	2	22	2
AA	1	3	10	0
BA/BS	1	21	2	0
MA/MS/M.Ed	3	10	0	0
Ph.D./Ed.D	1	0	0	0
Years of Experience in primary area				
Less than 1 year	0	0	4	0
1-5 years	1	15	17	2
5-10 years	0	15	8	0
More than 10 years	5	6	5	0

In terms of state requirements for teachers in early childhood education programs, 31 of the 36 teachers (86 percent) meet the requirements. Twenty-nine of these 31 teachers (94 percent) have an early childhood education certificate and/or endorsement. The remaining two teachers have an elementary teaching certificate and were employed full time in a prekindergarten program as of July 1, 2002, and thus, also meet the state requirements. In other words, most teachers in the program have specific training and/or experience in early childhood education.

Of the five teachers who do not meet the criteria of the state requirements for instruction of pre-kindergarten children, three have an AA degree and two have a high school degree/GED certificate. All five teachers have worked in the early childhood education program at Classroom on Wheels for several years. To enable these staff to continue their job

status, the five staff were “grand-fathered in” to the state requirements.

Inservice Training

Inservice training is a critical part of providing quality services to Nevada ECE families so that staff can learn about best practices in early childhood education and receive training in the program models (e.g., *High Scope*) projects adopt. Table 5 presents the number of projects that provided training to teachers and aides in eight inservice areas by specific hour ranges. The results show that project staff received substantial training in 2005-06.

Table 5. The Number of Projects That Provided Teachers and Aides Training by Hour Ranges

Inservice Topics	No hours	0 to 5 hours	6 to 10 hours	11 to 15 hours	Over 15 hours
a) Curriculum	0	2	1	2	4
b) Developmental areas	1	1	4	1	1
c) Learning environment	3	0	5	2	0
d) Children with special needs	2	4	0	1	1
e) Classroom or behavior management	2	3	1	1	1
f) Pedagogy-instructional strategies	1	2	4	2	0
g) Assessment	2	1	5	1	0
h) Involving parents	2	3	1	2	1

Overall, projects provided teachers and aides the most hours of training in *Curriculum* and *Developmental Areas* to help staff learn early childhood education best practices as well as the curriculum models implemented at the projects. Staff received the least amount of training in *Children with special needs*, perhaps because many projects did not serve children with special needs, and those that did, collaborated closely with special education teachers.

Chapter IV. Early Childhood Education Participant Characteristics

The characteristics of Nevada ECE participants are based on data from 10 projects that provided services to 1,093 families, including 1,125 children and 1,128 adults who participated in services from July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2006. Table 6 shows the number of families, adults, and children served by project.

Table 6. Number of Nevada ECE Participants by Project

Project	Families	Children	Adults	Total Participants
Carson City	83	84	84	168
Churchill County	38	41	39	80
Clark County	295	311	299	610
Classroom on Wheels	214	219	222	441
Douglas County	22	22	36	58
Great Basin C.C.	35	35	35	70
Humboldt County	43	43	43	86
Pershing County	37	38	38	76
Washoe County	303	309	309	618
White Pine County	23	23	23	45
Total	1093	1125	1128	2253

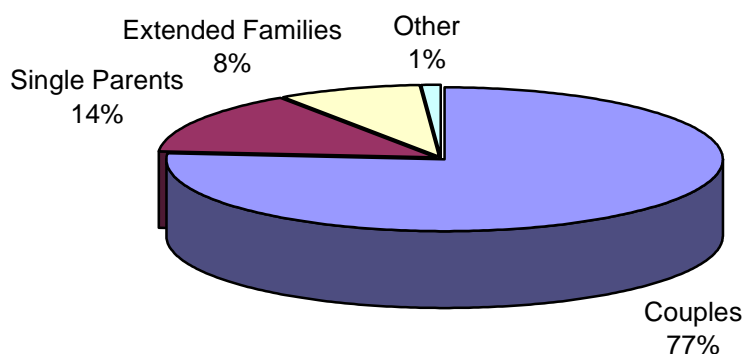
In addition to the families served, all 10 projects maintained a waiting list for 2005-06.

The 10 projects, which include 41 separate sites, reported they had 577 families waiting to enter the program—an average of 14 families for each of the 41 project sites.

Characteristics of Families

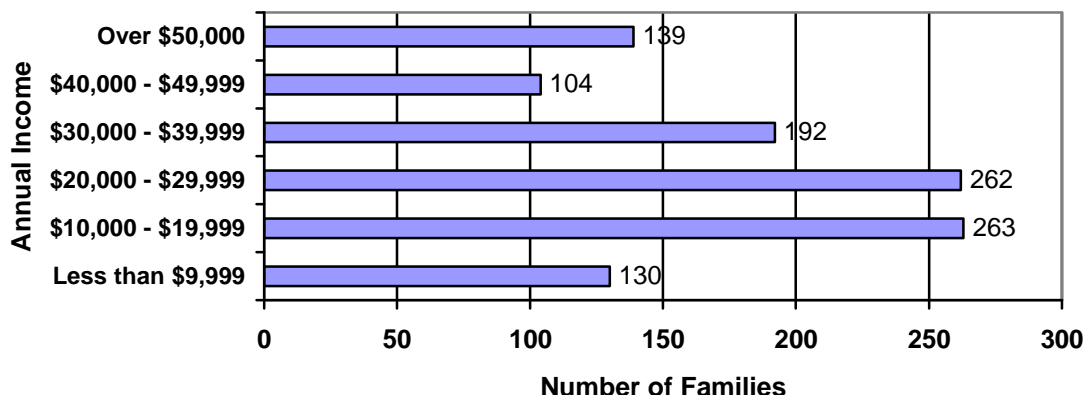
Household Composition. The largest percentage of families that participated in Nevada ECE described themselves as couples (835 families or 77 percent), followed by single parent families (154 families or 14 percent), extended family households (91 families or 8 percent), and “other” family structures (13 families or 1 percent). Extended families encompass children living with grandparents, stepparents, or guardians.

Figure 1. Structure of Nevada ECE Families



Family Income Level. Although family income level is not a criterion for Nevada ECE eligibility, the evaluation collected information about family income to describe the population served in the program. The data in Figure 2 indicate that while the program

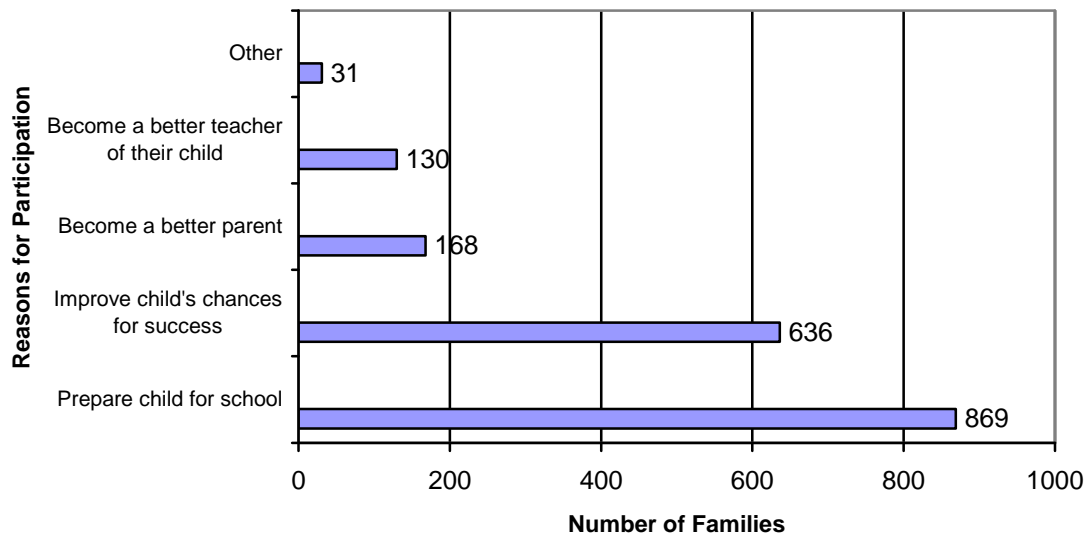
Figure 2. Income of Nevada ECE Families



served families with a large range of incomes, the largest portion of Nevada ECE families represent the poorer segment of the population. Thirty-six percent of Nevada ECE families (393 families) have incomes under \$20,000. Three families did not report an income level.

Reasons for Participating in Early Childhood Education. Parents were asked to provide up to two reasons why they wanted to participate in Nevada ECE. As shown in Figure 3, the two primary reasons for enrolling in the program were to better prepare their child for school (869 families or 80 percent) and to improve their child's chance of success in school (636 adults or 58 percent).

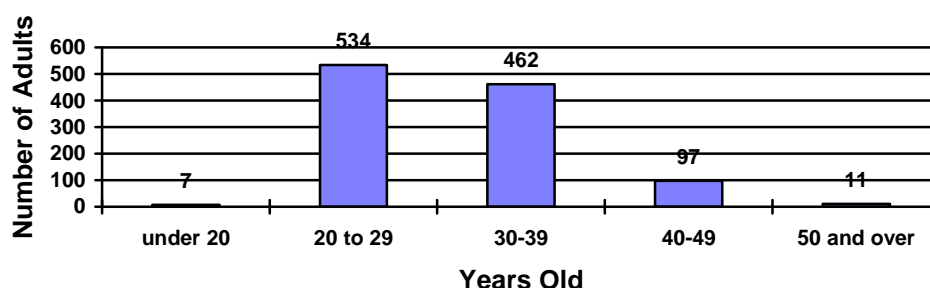
Figure 3. Reasons for Participating in Nevada ECE



Characteristics of Adults

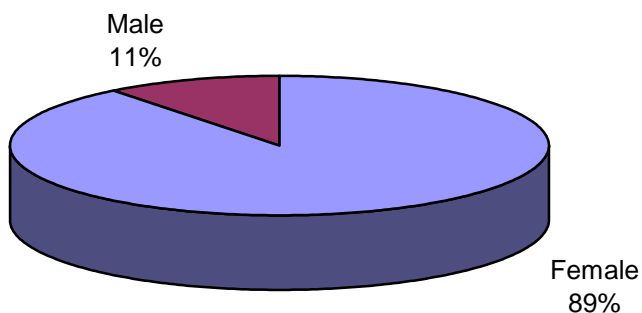
Age.⁷ Most adults were either 20 to 29 years of age (534 adults or 48 percent) or between 30 to 39 years old (462 adults or 42 percent). Seven adults (1 percent) were under 20 years old, 97 adults (9 percent) were between 40 and 49 years old, and 11 adults (1 percent) were over 50 years old. Data were unavailable for seventeen adults.

Figure 4. Age of Nevada ECE Adults



Gender. Most of the parents who participated with their children in Nevada ECE were female. Of the 1,128 adults, 1,008 (89 percent) were female and 120 (11 percent) were male.

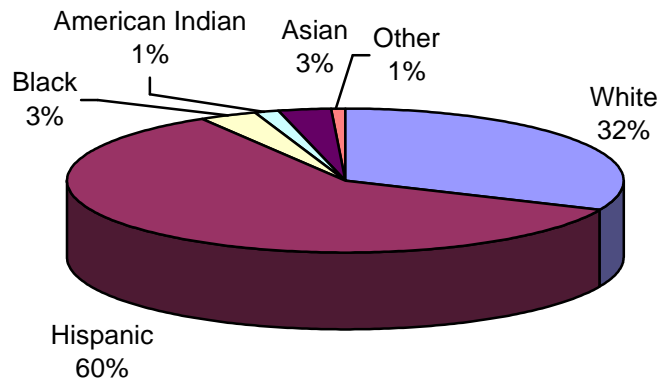
Figure 5. Gender of Nevada ECE Adults



⁷ Age was determined at the beginning of the program year as of September 1, 2005.

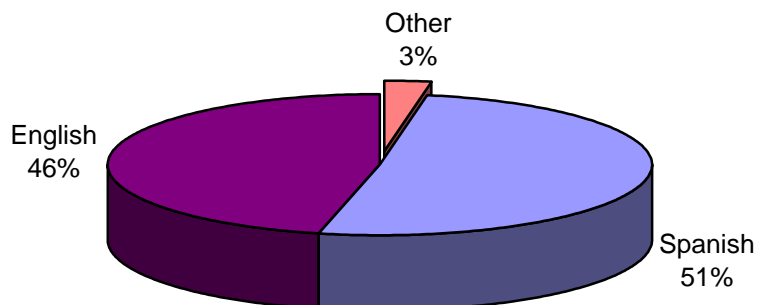
Ethnicity. The 10 projects served primarily Hispanic and White adults. Of the 1,128 adults, 675 (60 percent) categorized themselves as Hispanic, 356 (32 percent) categorized themselves as White not of Hispanic decent, 38 (3 percent) as Black, 36 (3 percent) as Asian, 15 (1 percent) as American Indian, and 8 (1 percent) adults categorized themselves as “Other.”

Figure 6. Ethnicity of Nevada ECE Adults



Language Spoken at Home. Of the 1,128 participating adults, 573 (51 percent) reported speaking Spanish at home, 524 (46 percent) reported speaking English, and 31 (3 percent) reported speaking “Other.”

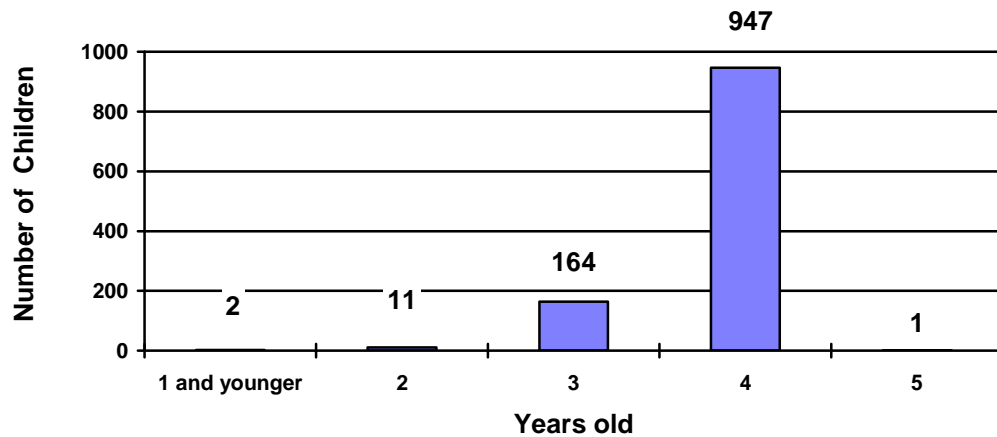
Figure 7. Language of Nevada ECE Adults



Characteristics of Children

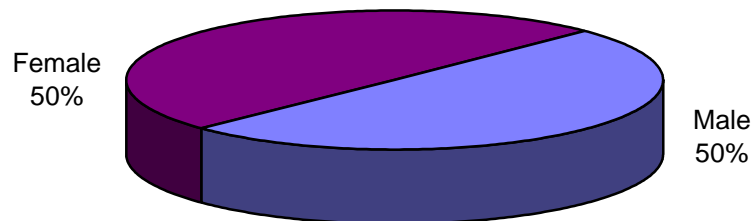
Age.⁸ Of the 1,125 children: 13 children (1 percent) were less than three years old; 164 children (15 percent) were three years old; and 947 children (84 percent) were 4 years old. One child was five years old.

Figure 8. Age of Nevada ECE Children



Gender. The 10 projects served equal numbers of male and female children. Of 1,125 children, 566 (50 percent) were male and 559 (50 percent) were female.

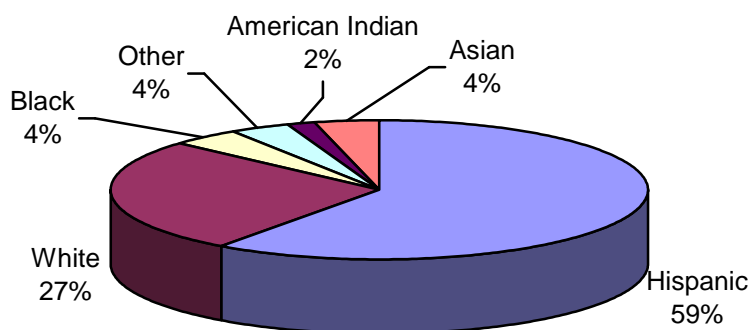
Figure 9. Gender of Nevada ECE Children



⁸ Age was determined at the beginning of the program year as of October 1, 2005.

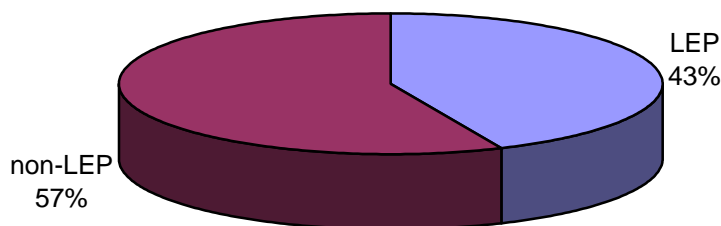
Ethnicity. Of the 1,125 children, 674 (59 percent) were Hispanic, 300 (27 percent) were White not of Hispanic decent, 49 (4 percent) were Black, 43 (4 percent) were Asian, 18 (2 percent) were American Indian, and 41 (4 percent) were categorized as “Other.”

Figure 10. Ethnicity of Nevada ECE Children



Limited English Proficient (LEP) Status. Of the 1,125 children, 488 children (43 percent) were Limited English Proficient while 637 (57 percent) were not.

Figure 11. Limited English Proficient Status of Nevada ECE Children



History of Participation in Non-Early Childhood Education Programs.

Nevada ECE plays an important role in the lives of children as reflected in their lack of participation in other educational programs. Of the 1,125 children, 77 percent (866 children) did not participate in any other educational program prior to Nevada ECE, and 85 percent (952 children) did not participate in any other educational program while in Nevada ECE. Without Nevada ECE, many children may not have participated in any educational program before enrolling in school. For many children, Nevada ECE helped prepare them for school.

Table 7. Number of Children Participating in Non-Nevada ECE Programs Before and Simultaneous with Nevada ECE ⁹

Non-Nevada ECE Programs	Before Nevada ECE Program	Simultaneous with Nevada ECE Program
Head Start	38	30
Even Start	15	14
Title I Preschool	7	3
Early Intervention, Early Childhood Special Education	44	64
Other Preschool or Infant/Toddler Program	90	27
Migrant Education	4	7
None	866	952
Other	80	34

Status If Child Did Not Participate in Early Childhood Education Program

An important question is what would Nevada ECE children do if they did not participate in the early childhood education program? Project staff asked participating adults at enrollment what would the child do if he/she did not participate in Nevada ECE—based on a list of possible choices as shown in Table 8. Of the 1,125 children, the majority of children (1,006 children or 89%) would spend all or part of the time at home—either with their parents (65 percent), grandparents or other adult family member (17 percent), or

⁹ Children can participate in more than one option.

with siblings (8 percent). Smaller percentages of children would spend all or a part of their time attending day care (123 children or 11 percent) or attending another preschool or infant/toddler program (117 children or 10 percent). In other words, at least 79 percent of the children would not have attended any structured or semi-structured early childhood education program prior to entering kindergarten without Nevada ECE. Thus, the Nevada Early Childhood Education program provides many children with an important opportunity to be better prepared when they enter school so they are more likely to succeed.

Table 8. The Status of Children if They Did Not Participate in the Nevada ECE Program

Status of child if not in the Nevada ECE program	Number of Children ¹⁰
a) Attend day care	123
b) Stay with grandparents or other adult family member	190
c) Stay at home with parents	727
d) Stay at home with siblings	89
e) Attend other preschool or infant/toddler program	117
f) Other (<i>specify</i>) _____	48

The profile of Nevada ECE families that emerges from the descriptive analyses is that many Nevada ECE families have provided their children with limited formal educational experiences prior to the program, are from minority ethnic backgrounds, are English Language Learners, and a sizeable number of families are poor. For many families, Nevada ECE gives them an important opportunity to better their lives by providing their children with developmentally supportive experiences to prepare them for school.

¹⁰ The number in Table 8 total more than the children in the program because children can participate in more than one option.

Chapter V. Early Childhood Education Services

Nevada ECE projects are required to provide services in early childhood education and parenting education. This chapter describes the intensity of these services to children and parents and the types of parenting services provided to parents.

Intensity of Services

A very important piece of information is the number of hours Nevada ECE projects offered participants in early childhood education and parenting education. Typically, research has found that the more hours participants spend in program activities, the larger the impact.

To determine the intensity of educational services, we asked directors to report the scheduled hours per month and duration of instruction in months for early childhood education and parenting education, as shown in Table 9. The number of projects that offered the service is shown as well: not all projects offer services in all areas.

Table 9. Average Scheduled Hours of Parenting and Early Childhood Services

Service Area	Number of projects	Hours per month	Duration of instruction in months	Total Average Hours
Early Childhood Education				
Under age 3	0	---	---	---
Age 3 and 4	9	48.6	9.1	437.4
Age 5	10	47.6	9.2	430.9
Parenting Education				
Parent alone	9	2.9	8.9	25.6
Parent and child are involved together	10	8.9	8.8	76.9

Early Childhood Education. The results show that nine projects served three to four year old children and 10 project served five year-old children. No projects served children under three years old.

The scheduled hours of early childhood education differed only slightly among children of different age groups. On average, nine projects scheduled three to four year olds an average of 437 hours of early childhood education (48.6 hours per month for 9.1 months), and 10 projects scheduled five year olds an average of 431 hours of early childhood education (47.6 hours per month for 9.2 months).

For comparison, we looked at the scheduled hours of early childhood education per month in Nevada ECE projects from 2004-05. During 2004-05, Nevada ECE projects scheduled an average of 444 hours for three to four year olds and 448 hours for five year olds. In other words, Nevada ECE programs offered just slightly fewer hours of early childhood education program in 2005-06 than in 2004-05.

Parenting Component. According to the original legislation for the Nevada ECE Program, Nevada ECE projects must have a parenting component. Project directors reported that all 10 projects provided some parenting education services in 2005-06. Nine projects provided parenting services to parents alone and all 10 projects provided parent and child together (PACT) time. On average, nine projects offered a total of 25.6 hours of *Parenting education alone*—2.9 hours per month for 8.9 months. In addition, 10 projects offered an average of 76.9 hours of *Parent and child time together*—8.9 hours per month for 8.8 months. In other words, most adults could receive a total of about 102 hours of parenting education during 2005-06.

For comparison, the number of hours per month of parenting education offered by Nevada ECE projects in 2005-06 is substantially more than the number of hours that Nevada ECE projects offered in 2004-05. On average, Nevada ECE projects offered a total of 19.7 hours of *Parenting education alone* and a total of 35.6 hours of *Parent and child time together* for a total of about 56 hours.

Types of Parenting Services

Ten project directors were asked to identify the types of parenting services provided to participating adults according to five choices. Table 10 shows the number of projects that provided different parenting services. The evaluation found that although some projects do not provide parenting services for all five choices, each project provides at least four services and five projects provide all five specified services to at least some families.

The most frequently conducted strategies were parent and child activities together (PACT) time and parents volunteer in the classroom: 10 projects had at least ‘some families’ participate in these two activities with seven projects having ‘most families’ participate. The next most frequently conducted strategy was parent/teacher conferences, (conducted by seven projects with ‘most families.’) Home visits was the least conducted strategy, three projects did not provide home visits.

Table 10. The Number of Projects That Provided Various Parenting Services to Families

Type of Parenting Service	<i>Not provided</i>	<i>Few families</i>	<i>Some families</i>	<i>Most families</i>
a) Parenting classes/workshops	1	1	3	5
b) Parent and child together activities (<i>e.g., family literacy nights, field trips</i>)	0	0	3	7
c) Parent/Teacher Conferences	1	0	2	7
d) Home Visits	3	0	2	4
e) Parents volunteer in the classroom	0	0	3	7
f) Other	0	0	1	4

Chapter VI. Participation in Services

Chapter IV showed that many Nevada ECE families have multiple disadvantages, including limited educational experiences, poverty, and limited English proficiency. Chapter V showed the amount of services and types of services (for parenting education) that Nevada ECE projects offer to address the educational needs of these families. This chapter will present the extent to which Nevada ECE families participated in the services.

For families, we examined—

- ♦ the percentage of families still participating in the program in June 2005,
- ♦ how many months families participated in the program, and
- ♦ the reasons they exited the program during the year.

For children, we examined—

- ♦ the number of hours children participated in early childhood education.

For adults, we examined—

- ♦ the number of hours adults participated in parenting education.

The results are presented in three sections: family participation, child participation, and adult participation.

Family Participation

Program Completion Rate.

A requirement of SB 525 is to determine the percentage of participants who drop out of the program before completion. The results show that 178 of the 1,093 families in Nevada ECE (16 percent) left the program during the 2005-06 school year. In other words, 84 percent of the families completed the program for 2005-06, which is slightly less than the percent of families who completed the program during the previous two years. That is, 87 percent of Nevada ECE families completed the program in both the 2003-04 and 2004-05 school years.

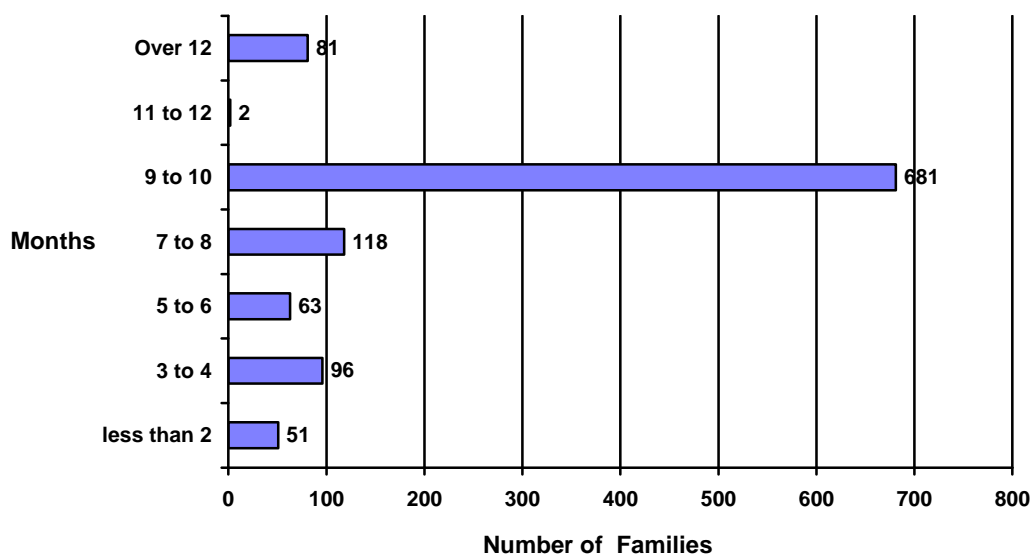
Length of Participation in Program.

Research has found that the length of time families participate in Early Childhood Education is positively correlated with the gains of adults in parenting skills and children in school readiness. Clearly, a primary purpose of the program is to retain children and adults in the program long enough so that they can reach program goals.

Figure 12 shows the number of families enrolled in Nevada ECE projects by months in the program. Data are available on 1,092 of the 1,093 families in the program.

On average, Nevada ECE families were in the program for an average of 8.9 months between their initial enrollment date and the end of the 2005-06 school year or their exit date (if they exited the program before the end of the program year). Figure 12 shows the average months of participation in two months intervals. The distribution shows that the majority of families (681 or 62 percent) stayed in the program for nine to 10 months. In other words, most families started Nevada ECE at the beginning of the program year and stayed until the end of the program year.

Figure 12. Number of Months Families Spent in ECE Program



Reason for Exiting Program.

Project staff reported a range of reasons why families left the program. Table 11 shows the number of families that exited the program for eight possible reasons. Overall, the most common reason why families exited the program was the family moved out of the area served by the ECE project (69 families or 39 percent). The other most common reason given why families exited the program included that the family was dropped due to incomplete participation or poor attendance (12 families or 7 percent). While projects indicated that 58 families exited the program for “Other reason,” only a few projects specified the reason.

Table 11. The Number of Families Exiting the Program by Reason

Reasons for Exiting Program	Families
Parent or child switched to a different program	6
Family moved out of the area served by the ECE program	69
Family stopped participating due to a lack of interest	6
Family was dropped due to incomplete participation or poor attendance	12
Family crisis prevents further participation	8
Conflicts or problems prevents continued participation	8
Other reason (specify) _____	58
Reason unknown	11
Total	178

Child Participation

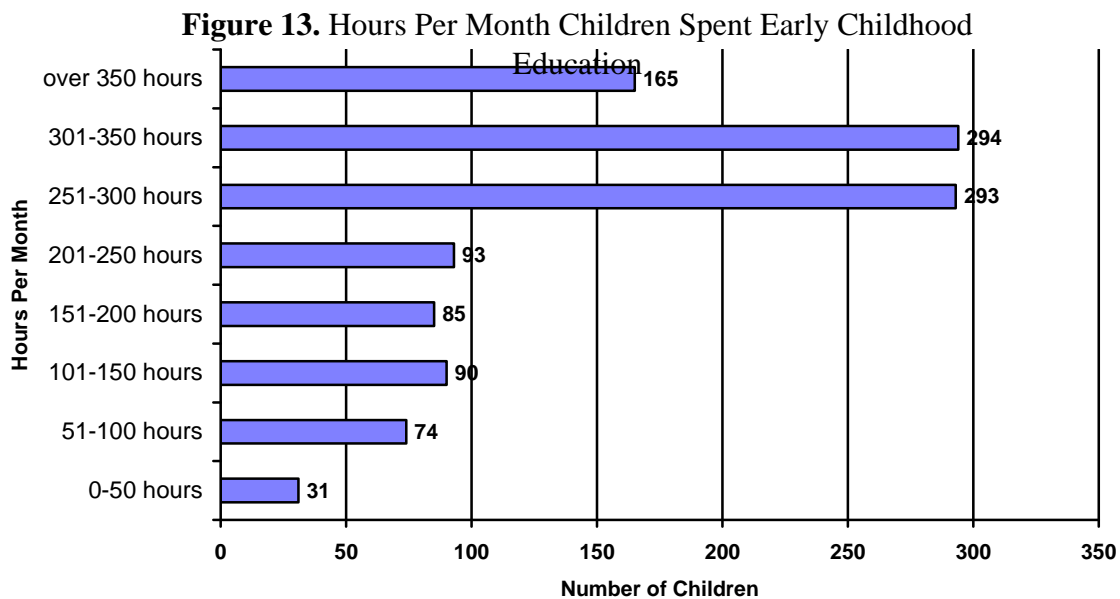
The primary component of Nevada ECE is early childhood education.

Hours of Participation in Early Childhood Education.

The amount of time Nevada ECE children participated in early childhood education should be a strong positive predictor of performance on early childhood measures. Data were available for all 1,125 children. Overall, Nevada ECE children participated in early childhood education an average of 264 hours, which is an increase from the total average

hours of 220 reported in 2004-05 and similar to the 267 hours reported in 2003-04.

To obtain a better picture of the amount of time children spent in early childhood programs, the evaluator determined the total number of hours that children spent in early childhood education within several hour ranges, as shown in Figure 13. The largest number of children (294 children or 26 percent) attended an average of 301 to 350 hours of early childhood education, followed by those who attended 251 to 300 hours (293 children or 26 percent). The figure also shows that a large number of children attended over 350 hours of early childhood education (165 children or 15 percent).



Adult Participation

The evaluation collected data on adult participation in parenting education, the second required component for Nevada ECE participation. The component is intended to better equip parents to support their children's social, emotional, and academic development.

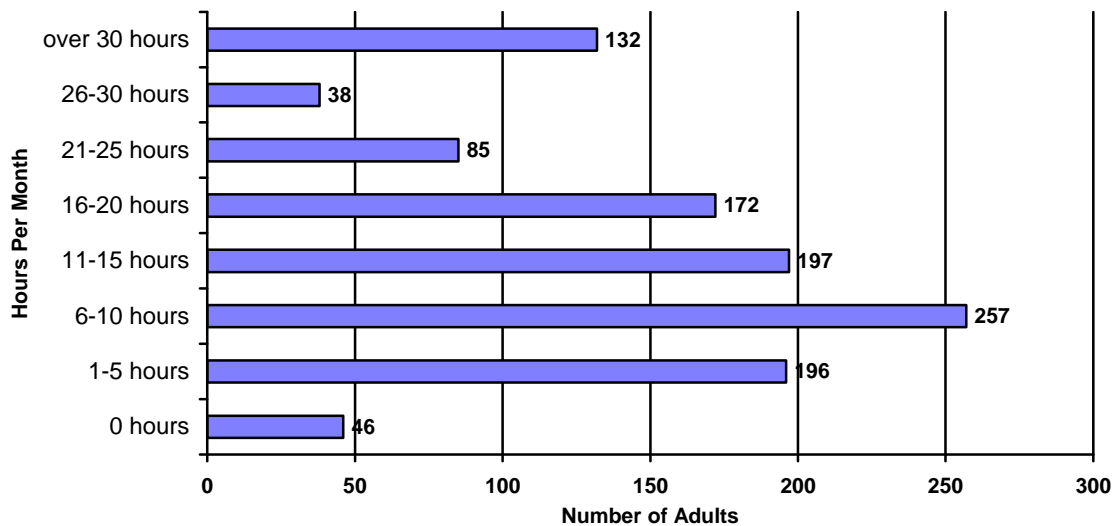
Hours of Parenting Education.

Data were available for 1,123 of the 1,128 adult participants. Projects reported that 46 parents (4 percent) had yet to participate in any parenting education services. While some of these parents had just enrolled their children in the program, other parents simply did not participate in parenting services.

Overall, the 1,123 adults participated in parenting education an average of 15.8 hours during the program, less than the 19.3 hours reported in 2004-05 and the 21.3 hours reported in 2003-04.

Figure 14 shows that the distribution in the total number hours in parenting education is skewed. Most adults (650 adults or 58 percent) participated in one to 15 hours of parenting education. A smaller group of parents (132 parents 12 percent) who participated in over 30 hours of parenting education substantially increased the average hours in parenting education (15.8) for the entire group.

Figure 14. Hours Per Month Adults Spent in Parenting Education



Chapter VII. Nevada ECE Project Descriptions

As mentioned previously, SB 525 requires three components for the evaluation: project descriptions, a summary of the effectiveness of the projects on early childhood education and parenting outcome indicators, and a longitudinal comparison of the data showing the effectiveness of different programs. This chapter presents the project descriptions. The evaluator visited all 10 projects in spring 2006, making a total of 13 site visits since several projects operate multiple early childhood education sites with different program models.¹¹

The evaluator collected information from each project based on a common set of program delivery indicators for effective early childhood education programs. The program delivery indicators were developed in June 2001 by the Nevada Even Start Statewide Family Literacy Initiative. The Initiative developed the program delivery indicators to monitor, evaluate, and improve Even Start projects within the State. In fact, Nevada developed two sets of indicators for Even Start: one set for program delivery and a second set for program outcomes. Even Start projects use the program delivery indicators as part of the required local evaluation to assess the program and build a program improvement plan. NDE uses the program outcome indicators as part of the statewide evaluation of all Even Start projects in Nevada. Because Nevada ECE provides services in some of the same areas as Even Start, the Early Childhood Education Evaluation Design Team decided to use some of the Even Start program delivery and program outcome indicators in the statewide evaluation of Nevada ECE.

The Even Start program delivery indicators cover 12 areas of family literacy programs. One area is Early Childhood Education Settings: it includes 17 sub-indicators. The 17

¹¹ The evaluator did not visit all the Nevada ECE sites in Carson City School District, Clark County School District, Classroom on Wheels, or Washoe County School District because of time and resource constraints. Carson City has two Nevada ECE sites, Clark County has 11 sites, Classroom on Wheels has three projects with 13 sites, and WCSD has nine sites. Instead, the evaluator visited one of two sites in Carson City, three of 11 sites in Clark County, one of three projects for Classroom on Wheels, and two of the nine sites in Washoe County. All of the sites visited at projects with multiple sites were representative of types of early childhood education models offered at these projects.

sub-indicators are placed on a 5-point rubric, in which “1” is “not at all descriptive” of the program and “5” is “very descriptive” of the program. The Nevada ECE evaluator further developed the rubric by identifying specific evidence to look for when using the rubric to rate the project. The Nevada ECE evaluator used the quality indicators from Early Childhood Education Settings to rate and to describe the quality of the implementation of Nevada ECE projects. (See Appendix B for a copy of the 17 sub-indicators and the Site Visitation Form used by the evaluator.)

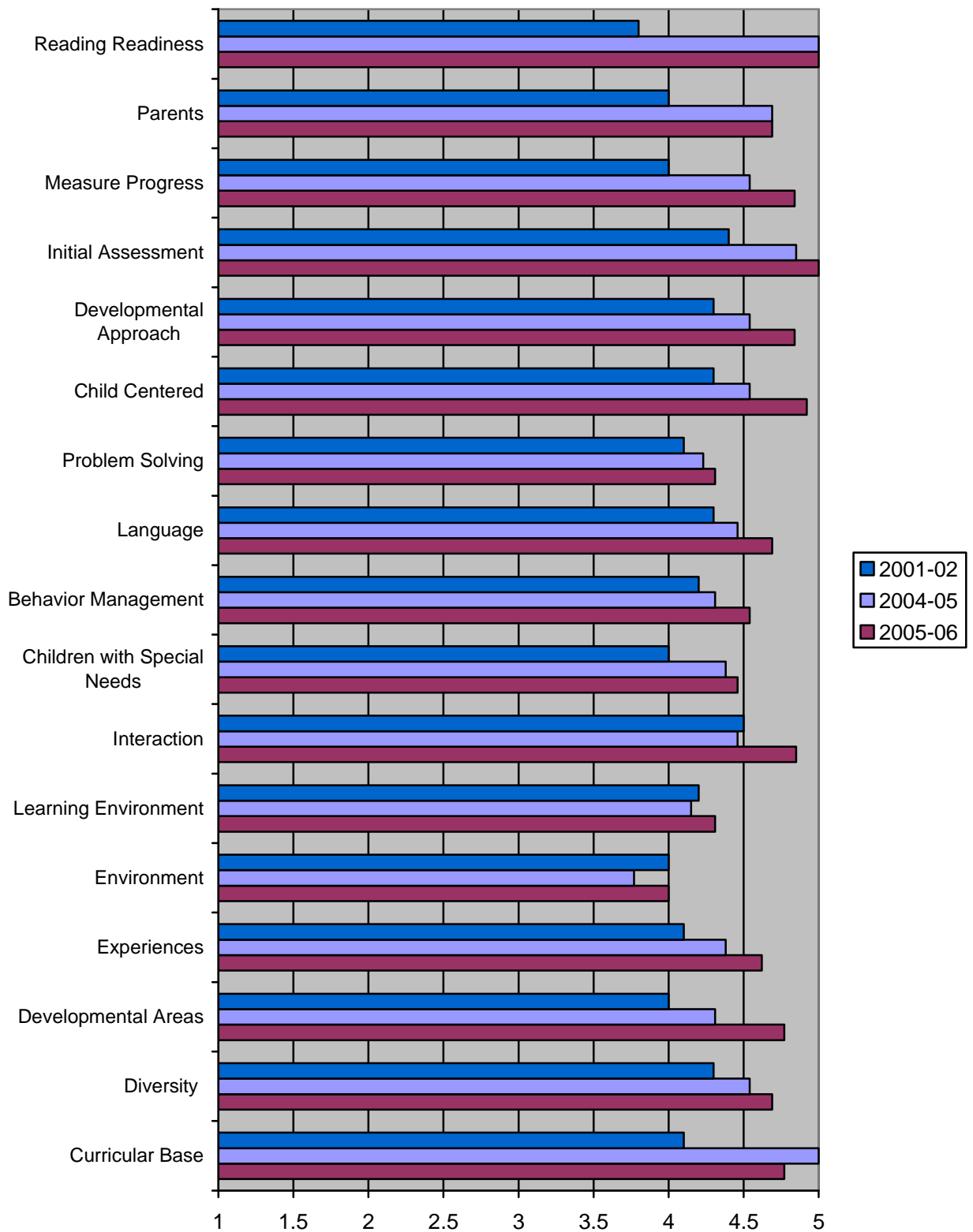
Nevada ECE Program Ratings. Figure 15 shows the Nevada ECE program ratings on the 17 sub-indicators of Early Childhood Program Settings across the project sites visited for the first year of the Nevada ECE program in 2001-02, the fourth year in 2004-05, and the fifth year in 2005-06.¹² (See Appendix C for each project’s rating on the 17 sub-indicators of Early Childhood Program Settings for 2005-06. See Appendix D for a summary of the last five years of project ratings from 2001-02 through 2005-06).

In 2005-06, the projects scored relatively high on all sub-indicators—from an average of 4.0 to 5.0. Projects scored relatively the highest on two indicators: *Initial Assessment* and *Reading Readiness*, which had mean ratings of 5.0. The indicator, *Initial Assessment*, refers to the use of a variety of formal and informal assessment techniques to measure domains of learning and development and to guide instruction. The indicator, *Reading Readiness*, refers to how projects encourage parents and caregivers to regularly read with children and to become actively involved in the reading experience. Nevada ECE projects scored high on these two indicators because all the projects use a variety of assessments to determine what children know in different early childhood domains and all projects are required to develop and implement parenting components that promote spending time with their children, especially reading with their children.

Projects in 2005-06 scored the lowest on *Environment*—which received a mean rating of 4.0. Nevada ECE Projects also received the lowest ratings on Environment for the last three years. *Environment* refers to whether the physical environment is safe, clean,

¹² The evaluator visited 10 project sites in 2001-02 and 13 project sites in 2004-05 and 2005-06. Seven of the project sites are the same for the three years.

Figure 15. Nevada ECE Program Ratings on ECE Indicators (1=low, 5=high)



well-lighted, comfortable, and age appropriate. Nevada ECE projects scored relatively low on this sub-indicator because two projects did not have playground areas or the most appropriate playground areas and because of safety issues.

The evaluation also compared ratings from 2005-06 with ratings from the first and fourth years of the program. Overall, the data shows that Nevada ECE projects showed an increase in the average ratings from 2001-02 to 2005-06 on 16 of the 17 indicators. Only one indicator, *Environment*, did not increase: it stayed the same primarily because of a lack of appropriate playground equipment and safety issues.

The results also show that 14 of the 17 indicators increased 2004-05 to 2005-06. Of the three indicators that did not increase over this time period, two remained the same (*Reading Readiness* and *Parents*) and only one decreased (*Curricular Base*). *Curricular Base* decreased because one project had a new teacher who had not yet been trained on the early childhood education model used in the classroom.

Project Descriptions. The project descriptions, starting on the page 35, include three sections:

- ♦ **project information** on location, intensity and duration of the early childhood program, staff, and child/adult ratio;
- ♦ **early childhood program** includes information on curriculum, learning environment, pedagogy, and assessment and continuous improvement; and
- ♦ **parenting program** includes information on the types of activities conducted to involve parents in the early childhood education program and parenting activities.

Table 13 presents information on the child/staff ratio and the primary early childhood education curriculum for the 13 project sites visited by the evaluator. Overall, the 13 project sites had a child/adult ratio from 4:1 to 10:1.¹³ The results also show that all 13 project sites used research-based, commercial early childhood education programs as their primary curriculum. Five sites used *High Scope*, three sites used the *Creative Curriculum*, and three sites used the Scholastic's *Building Language for Literacy*. Single sites used *Curiosity Corner* or *PreSchool Core Knowledge Curriculum*. The ECE projects supple-

¹³ NAEYC guidelines state four year-olds should be in groups of no more than 20 children with 2 adults. Nevada ECE Projects meet the NAEYC guidelines.

mented these curricula with a variety of other programs, including *Leap into Literacy*, *Self-Concept*, and *Talking Hands*.

Table 13. Child/Staff Ratio and Early Childhood Curriculum at Nevada ECE Projects

Project	Child/Staff Ratio	Primary Early Childhood Education Curriculum
Carson City School District	7:1	Curiosity Corner (Success For All)
Churchill County School District	9:1	High Scope
Clark County School District		
♦ Early Literacy Model	8:1	♦ Creative Curriculum
♦ Classroom on Wheels Model	5:1	♦ High Scope
♦ Community Based Model	5:1	♦ Creative Curriculum
Classroom on Wheels	8:1	Scholastic's Building Language for Literacy
Douglas County School District	4:1	High Scope
Great Basin College	5:1	Creative Curriculum
Humboldt School District	10:1	High Scope
Pershing County School District	4:1	High Scope
Washoe County School District		
♦ Early Literacy Model	8:1	♦ Scholastic's Building Language for Literacy
♦ High School Model	9:1	♦ Scholastic's Building Language for Literacy
White Pine School District	10:1	PreSchool Core Knowledge Curriculum

Carson City School District

Carson City School District (CCSD) used Nevada ECE funds to initiate and expand early childhood education programs at two project sites: Empire and Mark Twain Elementary Schools. Both sites use *Curiosity Corner*, which is the preschool component of *Success For All*, as the early childhood education curriculum. The evaluator visited Mark Twain Elementary School as representative of the CCSD Early Childhood Education Program.

Location. Mark Twain Elementary School, Carson City, Nevada.

Intensity and Duration. The Mark Twain Elementary School Pre-kindergarten Program operates two half-day early childhood classes from 8:25 to 11:15 a.m. and 12:10 to 3:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. Children receive 11 hours per week of early childhood education.

Staff. A full-time teacher and two full-time aides operate the program. One aide is bilingual.

Number of Children. The program serves 20 children in each the morning and afternoon classes for a child/adult ratio of approximately 6.5 to 1.

Early Childhood Program

Curriculum. The Mark Twain Elementary Pre-kindergarten Program uses *Curiosity Corner* as the early childhood curriculum. *Curiosity Corner* is the preschool component of *Success For All* which Mark Twain and Empire Elementary Schools implement in kindergarten through grade 5. Developed at John Hopkins University, *Success For All* is a research-based, comprehensive school reform program that aims to restructure schools to ensure the success of every child. *Success For All* provides the school with research-based curriculum materials, extensive professional development in proven strategies for assessment, instruction, classroom management, and active family support approaches. *Curiosity Corner* provides the teacher with a kit of learning activities and materials that are theme-based for each week. Some themes covered throughout the year include *Fun With Families*, *Sensational Senses*, *Here We Go...Transportation*, *To Market to Market*,

and *Art and Artists*. The teacher decides how long to spend on a given theme and may modify the units to meet student needs and interests. The teacher also uses curriculum materials from her 30 years of experience in early childhood education.

Curiosity Corner emphasizes oral language development using thematic units, children's literature, oral and written expression, and learning centers, called "labs." Pre-reading activities promote the development of concepts about print, alphabet familiarity, and phonemic awareness. The teacher uses the Peabody Language Development Kit for additional materials and activities in language development.

The program accommodates 20 Hispanic children in the two classes who are English Language Learners. The class has two educational assistants: one of the assistants is bilingual and translates for children as needed, reads books in Spanish, interacts with the Spanish-speaking parents, and translates written materials. At the time of the visit in late spring, most of the children spoke English during class. The classroom contains many bilingual books and other bilingual curriculum materials.

Learning Environment. The program is located in a large modular classroom: one-half is used for classroom space and the other half for equipment storage, teacher planning and preparation, and parent trainings. The classroom is equipped with child-sized tables and chairs as well as a child-sized bathroom. The classroom contains well-developed and very well-equipped learning centers, which include blocks, dramatic play, manipulatives, art, science, writing, language arts, computers, and water play. The materials in the dramatic play area changes as themes change...one week a farm, another week a grocery story, and another week a greenhouse. The materials in the library area and listening centers also change with the themes. The classroom also includes a very large children's library and children are encouraged to take books out daily. A parent library of books and resource materials are available in an adjacent room.

The school has two early childhood playgrounds for the children. One is shared with children in kindergarten through grade 3 and includes a large multi-center climbing apparatus plus additional gym bar climbers and swings. A second smaller playground includes a large sand space with appropriate toys and a tricycle trail that surrounds the area.

Pedagogy. The program provides both a teacher-led group time and a large block of time for active exploration in the learning “labs.” On the day of the visit, most activities related to the curriculum theme on Weather and “Blowing in the Wind.” In the Opening Circle, the teacher and the children enacted a poem about little winds and big winds. The teacher then opened a discussion, asking the children if they had looked up at the clouds and what they had seen. Then, the teacher discussed some toys that use the wind: a kite, a wind sock, bubbles.

The aide then introduced the various activities available in the Learning Labs...kiwis to be eaten at the snack lab...pinwheels to be made in the art area...a weather TV show in dramatic play...a counting activity with chocolate kisses in the writing area. For the next hour children actively explored the labs...coloring, cutting and building pinwheels, then running with them outside on the deck, dramatizing a TV weather show using a self-made camera and a map with weather symbols and a microphone.

The teacher and aides use frequent positive reinforcement and carefully listen to and converse with the children. Staff often help the children solve their own problems, encouraging children to talk and resolve issues among themselves.

The three-member teaching team is well balanced and works well together. The teacher provides the leadership for most activities while one aide works closely with the bilingual children, making sure they understand and participate in the activities. The other aide works in depth with other children, often writing anecdotal observations of individual children to monitor their progress.

Last year, the teacher trained her assistants in cognitive questioning skills, encouraging them to ask children questions that extend their thinking during activities. The assistants often questioned students this year to further the children’s learning. Program staff also used the concept of Key Vocabulary this year, highlighting key words each week to make sure all the children know and understand their meaning.

Assessment and Continuous Improvement. One of the teacher assistants administers the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-III and the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabu-

lary Test to all the children at the beginning and end of the year. All staff keep notes on daily observational forms to track the developing skills of the children, which they review on Fridays to plan classroom activities. The program keeps a file for each child with his/her work samples. Staff spend time at the end of each day discussing specific children and which learning activities seemed most effective.

Parenting Program. Parents are required to sign a Commitment List that details their specific commitment to the program. This includes providing transportation, ensuring excellent attendance, participating in six school-related activities, and spending time each day with their child reading, playing, and talking.

The teacher conducts a home visit at the beginning of the year to discuss the program and identify parenting goals. The teacher also holds a parent conference in November and at the end of the year to review each child's "report card" with the parent. Parents receive a weekly newsletter, written in English and Spanish, which informs them of classroom activities, upcoming field trips, etc.

The head teacher conducted three Family Storyteller sessions, helping parents learn specific techniques to read with their child. Parents regularly volunteer in the classroom or make things at home for the classroom. Many parents assisted with field trips, such as to the public library and the Farm Day at the Park. Parents can check books or tapes out from the classroom library as well as Parent Backpacks which include specific books and activities for the parent and child to do together.

Churchill County School District

Location. E.C. Best Elementary School, Fallon, Nevada.

Intensity and Duration. Churchill County School District operates two half-day early childhood classes, Monday through Thursday from 7:45 to 10:50 a.m. and from 11:45 to 2:45 p.m. The children receive 12 hours of early childhood education.

Staff. A full-time teacher and a full-time aide operate the classroom. The program also includes parents who are required to volunteer in the classroom three times a month.

Number of Children. The Churchill County Pre-Kindergarten program serves 18 children per session for a child/adult ratio of 9 to 1. However, the ratio is much lower because several parents are in the classroom daily.

Early Childhood Education Program

Curriculum. The program uses *High Scope*, a research-based program that addresses all aspects of early childhood education. This curriculum encourages children to plan their day, work actively in learning centers, and then think about and review their activities with each other.

The teacher also uses the *Parents Are Teachers* program, which includes developmental materials for parents and parent/child activities, as part of monthly home visits.

Learning Environment. The classroom, located in the elementary school, contains several large learning centers (dramatic play, blocks, art, computers, a library, manipulatives, a water table), all equipped with a variety of learning materials. The classroom has four computers which children use frequently. The classroom does not have separate bathroom facilities. Instead, the children use the school's bathroom facilities across the hall.

The program uses an outdoor play area, which is fenced to protect the area from the wind and the noise of the highway. The play area includes a new multi-use climbing apparatus, swings, balance beams, and large tires. A large storage shed was built last year by volunteers from the nearby Fallon Naval Air Base to house outdoor equipment. Program staff want to build a tricycle trail during the summer with the assistance of a local construction company.

The class is culturally diverse, including Hispanic, Filipino, and Native American children. Several of these parents were working in the classroom on the day of the visit.

Pedagogy. The classroom can be described as a "*Child & Family Center*" because many parents and other siblings are involved in classroom activities daily. On the day of the visit, five parents helped with the morning class and several parents assisted in the after-

noon class. Parents helped prepare the learning centers, brought in and assisted with snack, read to the children, and assisted with the afternoon curriculum walk.

In developing her lesson plans, the teacher incorporates the Nevada Pre-K Standards as a general guide for daily activities in conjunction with her ongoing theme. The theme was transportation on the day of the visit. They discussed cars and driving tests and road signs during Circle Time. Later the teacher read a book about racing cars and there was an active discussion on going to car races.

Prior to center time, staff asked the children in what area they were going to work. During open activity time, children could take a driver's test with a scooter course in the hall. Other children were in the library area reading several books related to the theme: *If I Could Drive a Crane, Trucks, Bicycles, The Truck Book*...and several Buick advertisement brochures. Several boys played with cars and trucks on the floor on a large map of their town made by the children in a previous session.

Assessment and Continuous Improvement. The teacher administered the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test at the beginning and end of the year to all children. In addition, she used the High Scope Literacy Assessment to assess literacy ability. The teacher also administers a Pre-Kindergarten skills assessment three times during the year to assess children on specific skills needed for kindergarten and completes an Exit Skills assessment at the end of the school year. The teacher keeps individual children's portfolios with ongoing samples of the children's work and test results.

The program included several children on speech Individual Education Plans who received speech therapy from a School District speech therapist regularly.

Parenting Program. Parents are required to sign a Parent-Teacher Contract in which they agree to participate in a number of activities, including one home visit per month; two school-wide Family Activity Nights (e.g. *Reading Night, Math Night, Multi-Cultural Night*); at least four parenting classes; three parent-teacher conferences; at least three classroom volunteer visits per month; and the completion of one reading log per month.

The teacher made monthly home visits incorporating the *Parents are Teachers (PAT)* program, a research-based parent education curriculum. Using the PAT curriculum, the teacher models a developmentally appropriate activity, observes the parent and child complete the activity together, and then provides feedback to the parent.

The teacher conducted a number of workshops for the parents and children together. The parents planned a number of in-class festivals and planned a carnival at the end of the school year. The program provides books, games, and other resources the parents can check out to use in their homes.

Clark County School District

Clark County School District (CCSD) used Nevada ECE funds to initiate and expand early childhood education programs at 11 project sites. The 11 project sites represent three distinct models of providing early childhood education services: Early Literacy, Community-Based Child Care, and Classroom on Wheels (COW) models.

Early Literacy. The early literacy projects are located at elementary schools in areas designated as empowerment zones. The projects serve typically developing children from the school's attendance area. Because of the large number of families who applied, the schools used a lottery to select children for the program. All the project sites in this model use *Creative Curriculum* as the primary early childhood education curriculum in conjunction with the Macmillan/McGraw-Hill Reading Program. These are supplemented with *Ready, Set, Leap!* and *River Deep*—which emphasizes the use of technology to facilitate literacy learning. The Nevada ECE program supported six early literacy project sites: Bracken Elementary, Cunningham Elementary, G.E. Harris Elementary, McCaw Elementary, McWilliams Elementary, and Warren Elementary.

Community-Based Child Care. These early childhood education projects are located in community-based childcare centers that volunteered for the program. Under this model, children with special needs who have an Individual Education Plan are placed in

childcare centers that primarily serve typically developing children.¹⁴ CCSD places a Special Education early childhood teacher and an instructional aide at the community-based childcare centers to work with these children. An important feature of this model is the role of the Special Education teachers placed in the childcare centers. The Special Education teachers are teacher-mentors who provide training in early childhood education to all the child care center's instructors and aides. As a result, the Special Education teachers help to improve the overall quality of the early childhood activities conducted at these centers, benefiting all the children who attend them. The Nevada ECE program supported three community-based child care sites: Lone Mountain Creative Learning Center, Creative Kids Learning Center in Henderson, and Variety Day Home.

*Classroom on Wheels.*¹⁵ The Classroom on Wheels Model is unique in that the early childhood education project is located on a school bus converted into a mini-early childhood learning environment. The Classroom on Wheels program in Clark County adopted *High Scope* as the early childhood education curriculum. Another unique feature of the Classroom on Wheels Model is that it also supports adult literacy and parenting education. While children attend the early childhood education program in one bus, parents can attend adult literacy, computer literacy, or parenting education classes in another bus that accompanies the early childhood bus.

The Clark County School District ECE project supported two Classroom on Wheels sites: at Halle Hewetson Elementary School and at C.C. Ronnow Elementary School.

The Clark County School District (CCSD) Nevada ECE program developed district level activities in parenting education and staff development in which all ECE project sites

¹⁴ The parents of the children with special needs select the child care placement in lieu of other options. At each child care center, ECE program staff select a small group of typically developing peers to participate in the program. The typically developing children are volunteers selected from the child care center's existing population. These typically developing children receive instruction from the Special Education teacher and assistant as well as participate in the program evaluation.

¹⁵ The Classroom on Wheels Model, described here, is the same model implemented in the Statewide Classroom on Wheels Program. The main difference is that Classroom on Wheels Model described here is funded jointly between Clark County School District and the Statewide Classroom on Wheels Program. Other Statewide Classroom on Wheels buses are not necessarily funded with other school district ECE project funds.

could participate. In parenting education, the CCSD ECE program offered four activities.

- *The STAR (Sit Together and Read) Program.* CCSD developed the *STAR* program which provides families with a tote bag monthly containing a book and activity, helping parents learn specific skills in reading one-to-one with their child.
- *Nurturing Parents & Families Series.* The Clark County Department of Family Services developed this program which includes six two-hour workshops covering topics such as understanding the developmental stages of early childhood, stress management techniques, establishing routines, solving problems, and using positive discipline methods.
- *Ready to Learn Program.* Las Vegas' Public Broadcasting Service station, KLVX, developed the program to help parents learn to view a TV program with their child, read a book about the program, and then complete a related activity together.
- *The Family Storyteller Program.* The University of Nevada Reno Cooperative Extension Office developed and offered the *Family Storyteller* program. It provides monthly workshops for six months to help parents and children learn to enjoy reading together.

In staff development, the CCSD ECE Program conducted monthly trainings which included workshops on Assessing with the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-III and the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test, Macmillan/ McGraw Hill Early Reading Curriculum, IEP Procedures, Behavior Management, Positive Behavior Supports, Diversity: English Language Learners, Creative Curriculum, Early Literacy, Assessment Procedures, Family Storyteller for English Language Learners, and Building Effective Teams.

The evaluator visited J.T. McWilliams Elementary School as representative of an early literacy model, Lone Mountain Learning Center as representative of a community-based child care model, and the bus that went to both Halle Hewetson and C.C. Ronnow Elementary Schools as representative of the COW model. Each project is described briefly below.

Early Literacy Model

Location. J. T. McWilliams Elementary School, Las Vegas, Nevada.

Intensity and Duration. The McWilliams Early Childhood Literacy Program operates a morning class from 9:10 to 11:40 a.m. and an afternoon class from 12:50 to 3:20 p.m., Monday through Thursday. Children receive approximately 10 hours per week of early childhood education.

Staff. A full-time teacher and full-time aide operate the program. The aide is bilingual.

Number of Children. The program serves 15 children in the morning session and 15 children in the afternoon session for a child/adult ratio of 7.5 to 1.

Early Childhood Program

Curriculum. The McWilliams Early Childhood Literacy Program uses the *Creative Curriculum* as the primary early childhood curriculum. *Creative Curriculum* is a research-based program that includes well-developed learning centers and extensive time periods for children to actively explore and interact with their environment. The program includes seven literacy components: literacy as a source of enjoyment, vocabulary and language, phonological awareness, knowledge of print, letters and words, comprehension, and books and other texts.

The teacher also uses the *Ready, Set, LEAP! Program* which is an interactive, multi-sensory literacy program using different technological tools. For example, the *LeapPad* is an interactive technology platform which allows children to listen to different stories, learn vocabulary and concepts, and engage in activities alone or in small groups. The *LeapDesk Workstation* is a computer software program that speaks the names of letters of the alphabet and pronounces them in the context of specific words. Children can manipulate the plastic letters, numbers, or shapes to begin writing words and simple sentences. The class also uses *River Deep*, which includes animated computerized stories and literacy activities, with matching books, as well as computerized art activities.

The program serves primarily Hispanic children. The aide is Hispanic and frequently uses

Spanish in the classroom and in working with the parents.

Learning Environment. The classroom is located in a wing of the school and contains several learning centers (blocks, dramatic play, manipulatives, art, language arts, science and computer center) geared to the developmental needs of the children. A new tool center was added this year. The bathroom facility is adjacent to the classroom.

The early childhood program uses the regular school playground that accommodates the younger elementary children. The playground is located on the other side of the school, a considerable distance from the preschool classroom. The children use a large multi-use climbing apparatus as well as wagons and tricycles, balls and hula hoops, and stilt walkers, which they bring to the playground in a wagon.

The classroom is relatively small and contains many materials: most walls and shelves are covered with children's artwork and past projects. The classroom appears crowded at times due to the room configuration: however, the children are actively involved in all centers around the room. The classroom contains a number of materials reflecting the Hispanic culture, including books, dolls, and clothing in the dramatic play area.

Pedagogy. The teacher incorporated the new State Preschool Standards into the daily lesson plans. On the day of the visit, the children learned about snails. The science area contained a small aquarium with several snails and several books on snails and slugs. During the extended activity, several children looked at the snails with magnifying glasses and small lenses. During Circle Time the teacher involved the children in the poem, *Sammy the Snail*.

The teacher uses songs and fingerplays as a large part of her curriculum, and feels they are effective approaches for young children learning a new language. She has children clap out rhythm in songs, and the same songs and fingerplays are repeated many times over the weeks to build the children's vocabulary.

The activities planned for the children were appropriate for their ages, which in this classroom, included three, four, and five year-olds at the time of the visit. The activities are open-ended, allowing children from a range of developmental levels and language

abilities to experience success. Routines are followed carefully and kept simple. A picture chart shows the children the sequence of the session's activities.

The program focuses on literacy and language development. The teacher talks with the children throughout the day, carefully pronouncing and reinforcing word recognition and vocabulary development. The aide uses some Spanish but primarily speaks in English. During activity time, the teacher often reads to a child or small group of children, helping the children acquire and understand any new vocabulary from the book. On the day of the visit, the evaluator heard both English and Spanish being spoken by the children in the various learning centers.

Assessment and Continuous Improvement. The teacher administered the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test to the children at the beginning and end of the year. In addition, she completes a Developmental Continuum Assessment from *Creative Curriculum* three times a year (November, February and May) and keeps a Child Progress and Planning Report on each child that includes work samples and anecdotal notes. She also has the children do a figure drawing at the beginning of the year. She shares this data with the families at the end of the year during parent conferences.

Parenting Program. Parents participate in a five-week "*Nurturing Parents*" class offered in Spanish and English, as well as the five-week "*ABC's of Parenting*" series which included lectures, videos, and interactive discussions. The teacher also coordinated a *Literacy Night* for parents, using the University of Idaho Emergent Literacy Project Training Module on *Reading to Your Child*. This particular module includes a movie followed by a discussion.

The PBS Station (KLVX) comes twice a year to offer workshops to the families. This year they conducted a *Music Workshop* and a *Good Dental Health Workshop*.

The teacher and aide meet with parents individually on Fridays. During these meetings the teacher discusses with the parents how to select the best books for their child's age and how to effectively read to the child and ask questions. Other meetings showcase how

parents can play learning games at home with their children. Because most parents are Spanish-speaking, the aide translates during these meetings.

Parents receive a *STAR* book monthly with interactive activities for the parent and child to do daily. Parents also receive the monthly Scholastic's *Parent & Child* Magazine. The teacher has parents record the amount of PACT time and reading time they spend with their children.

Classroom on Wheels (COW) Model

Location. The Classroom on Wheels (COW) bus parks in front of C.C. Ronnow Elementary School in the morning and Halle Hewetson Elementary School in the afternoon. The COW teacher drives the bus during the lunch break to the second site.

Intensity and Duration. This COW Bus operates two half-day early childhood classes, four days a week. Children attend class from Monday through Thursday from 8:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. or from 12:00 noon to 2:30 p.m. Children receive 10 hours per week of early childhood education.

Staff. Two full-time teachers, one funded by the Nevada ECE program and one funded by the Classroom on Wheels Program, operate the program with a CCSD teacher aide.

Number of Children. The program serves 16 children in both the morning and afternoon sessions for a child/adult ratio of a little over 5 to 1.

Early Childhood Program

Curriculum. Classroom on Wheels uses two early childhood education programs. *High Scope* is a well-researched early childhood education program that covers all aspects of early childhood education, allowing children to plan their day, make choices of activities and materials, and then review their work. The teachers carefully follow the *Plan-Do-Review* approach in the classroom. The second program is the Macmillan/McGraw-Hill *Pre-K Reading Program* developed by Bank Street School of Education in New York City. This program provides a model for developing skills in listening and speaking, phonological awareness, print and book awareness and comprehension, and drawing and

writing skills. The curriculum contains eight units on various topics and includes Big Books, Sing Along Charts, and CD's with interactive rhymes and songs.

The teachers on this bus have also integrated activities from *Peace in the Preschool Curriculum* into the class and activities from *Second Step*, a conflict resolution, anti-violence curriculum.

In addition to the early childhood education program, children receive services from the *Clinic on Wheels* Bus, which provides assistance with medical and dental screenings, immunizations, and developmentally appropriate health education lessons.

The program serves primarily Hispanic children who are non-English speaking. The COW teacher and the CCSD aide are Hispanic and bilingual. At the time of the visit in mid-spring, children spoke in both English and Spanish to each other.

Learning Environment. The COW bus is a mobile early childhood education classroom, equipped with folding panels that flip out and become mini-learning centers (blocks, dramatic play, manipulatives, art, sand and water play, writing center, listening center, reading area) when the classroom is in session. The learning centers contain a wide variety of learning materials considering the limited space on the bus, 8 feet by 39 feet. All centers have signs in both English and Spanish (e.g. Centro de Escuchar/Listening Center, Area de Escribir/Writing Center).

On the day of the visit, all three COW bus staff engaged children in activities and conversation. The theme of the week was on farm animals. The teacher read the book, *I Went Walking* (where they see various animals) and then led the children in the song “*Old McDonald Had a Farm* “ Staff then divided the children into two groups, where each teacher guided her group through a vocabulary-building activity using a farm theme, showing a picture and then saying the word. Next, using a planning board showing the learning centers, each child chose where they wanted to start working and placed their name card on that area of the planning board.

The early childhood program has a long activity time that allows children to work in-depth on activities. The back of the bus contains an art area with an easel and other art ac-

tivities available. On the day of the visit, children painted with watercolors on the easels and drew pictures which they enhanced with stars and glitter. In the middle of the bus, several children worked at a small sand table filled with hay and plastic farm animals. Three boys played with animal puppets and other children drew on paper and wrote letters in the writing area.

The children do not have use of a playground area which does limit gross motor development. However, each session closes with active songs and movement.

Staff are positive and clear with children. There are three rules: no more than three children to a center, clean your area before you move to another center, and take turns. Behavior problems appear to be rare and enthusiasm for learning is apparent.

Pedagogy. Program staff plan activities for children appropriate for their ages and developmental stages using the McGraw-Hill curriculum units as their guide. The teachers review the daily schedule with the children during small group time; have children plan where they are going; and allow a large block of time for children to choose their own activities, to discuss the activities in which they participated, to read a book, and to sing a song. The class made several field trips, including the Las Vegas Library, the Lied Children's Museum, Anderson Dairy, and the Shark Reef at Mandalay Bay Resort. The teacher incorporates learning activities to every field trip.

Assessment and Continuous Improvement. Program staff administer the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test as part of program evaluation. They also administer the Brigance Screening Tool to each child three times a year and use the Creative Curriculum Child Progress and Planning Report to summarize each child's developmental progress.

Staff maintain portfolios that contain work samples and test results on each child and staff regularly write observations about child skill development on note cards posted around the bus.

The program serves a small number of children on a speech IEP who receive speech therapy in the adjacent school. Program staff have sent children to Child Find for assessment.

Parenting Program. Staff encourage parents to be involved in the early childhood program. The program uses the *STAR Program*, sending a book home once a month with guidelines for the parent on reading the book (e.g., asking their children questions, such as, Do you remember how the story ended?) Parents also had the opportunity to join the Scholastic Book Club and receive the monthly magazine *Parent & Child*.

Classroom on Wheels provides several opportunities for parents to improve their parenting skills and literacy skills. To improve parenting skills, staff encourage parents to attend the community-based parenting programs mentioned previously, i.e., the County's *Nurturing Parents & Families Program*, the Cooperative Extension Office's *Family Storyteller Program*, and the PBS *Read, View and Do* workshops.

To improve their own literacy skills, parents can attend the Computer on Wheels Program, which offers English as a Second Language and computer literacy classes in a separate bus parked alongside the early childhood bus on certain days. On these days, parents drop their children off at the COW bus and walk over to their own classroom.

Community Based Child Care Model

Location. Lone Mountain Creative Learning Center, Las Vegas, Nevada.¹⁶

Intensity and Duration. The Lone Mountain Creative Learning Center offers half-day and full-day preschool/day care to over 184 children: 30 children participate in the Nevada ECE program. The morning session operates from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. and the afternoon session is from 12:30 to 3:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. Most children attend both the morning and afternoon sessions and receive 20 hours a week of early childhood education.

Staff. A full-time early childhood special education teacher and two aides work with the Center's teachers in the morning session and operate the afternoon class. All are with Clark County School District.

¹⁶ This is a private child care center, a community-based option for parents whose child has been assessed and qualified for an early childhood special education program.

Number of Children. The project served 30 children: 22 children have special needs with Individual Education Plans and eight children are typically developing peers. Because the 30 children are in three separate classrooms in the morning session, each with different numbers of children and because program staff vary their days in the classroom, it is difficult to identify a specific child/adult ratio for the morning classes. In the afternoon session, the Nevada ECE staff are in their own classroom and have a child/adult ratio of 5 to 1.

Early Childhood Program

Curriculum. The Lone Mountain Creative Learning Center Pre-kindergarten program uses *Creative Curriculum* as the primary early childhood curriculum. This model emphasizes interactive learning through exploration in carefully designed learning centers. The program also contains literacy activities that emphasizes books as a source of enjoyment, vocabulary and language, phonological awareness, knowledge of print, letters and words, and basic comprehension. Program staff supplement the curriculum with *Ready, Set, Leap!* which is an interactive, multi-sensory program that uses technology to provide literacy activities, including alphabet recognition, phonemic awareness and pre-reading lessons. The teacher also uses the *Macmillan/McGraw Hill Curriculum* for thematic units and *Building Blocks for Readers* to emphasize listening and speaking activities, phonological awareness, and printing, drawing and writing skills.

Staff also use activities and materials, e.g., posters and puppets, from the *Peace Begins in the Preschool*, a conflict resolution violence prevention curriculum developed by the Clark County Neighborhood Justice Center. In addition, the Lone Mountain Center teaches all children some sign language. All teachers receive workshops in teaching American Sign Language and utilize the *Wee Can Sign* curriculum throughout the year.

Learning Environment. Each classroom is large, well lit, and equipped with child-sized tables and chairs and a wide array of learning materials appropriate for the age range in the classroom. The very high ceilings in the classrooms, however, can cause the noise level to become very loud. The learning centers are labeled and indicate the number of children for each center. Child-sized bathroom facilities are adjacent to each classroom.

The Center has a beautiful, carefully planned outdoor playground area appropriate for different age groups. The playground includes a multi-use climbing apparatus and a second smaller climber, tricycle trails, swings, shaded sand play areas, and a children's garden, allowing the children to plant vegetables and flowers. The program includes special adaptive equipment (e.g., adaptive scissors, writing implements, etc.) which are frequently used with special needs children.

The three and four year-old classrooms are very large and well equipped, containing a wide variety of learning materials and are particularly language-rich with books, signs, labels, puppets, *LEAP* materials, computers, etc. These larger classrooms have 30 children, beyond the group size limit recommended by NAEYC (especially for three year olds), but within the licensing standards for Clark County.

The classrooms include children from several ethnic groups, including Caucasian, Black, Asian, and Hispanic. The classrooms contain a number of diversity-oriented books, dolls, and other learning materials. This year, classroom teachers had family members from the different cultures share unique meals and customs from their culture with the children.

Pedagogy. This early childhood project is different from other models funded under Nevada ECE in that the early childhood special education teacher does not have her own classroom during the morning but rather acts as a trainer and mentor for the Center's pre-school classroom teachers. The ECE children, most of whom have Individual Education Plans, are mainstreamed into the two regular classrooms in the morning. Program staff work with both their own children and the Center's other children in these different classrooms. The ECE teacher meets with the Learning Center teachers on Fridays for training and curriculum review.

At the time of the visit, one School District aide worked in each classroom and the teacher spent Monday and Tuesday morning in the three year-old class, and Wednesday and Thursday in a four year-old class. For example, on the day of the visit, the teacher was in the four year-old classroom and she and her aide interacted with the ECE children at the learning centers, e.g., making tissue paper flowers in the art area, building with lego blocks. After Center Time, the children practiced several graduation songs.

In the afternoon, the teacher and her two aides work with 15 children in their own classroom: 10 of the children have special needs and are on IEPs. In this class the staff focus on literacy activities and meeting each child's Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals through carefully planned small group and large group activities. On the day of the visit, several children made pre-cut flowers during Center Time, others prepared food in the house/dramatic play area, and others played at the sensory table with salt and sand. Later, the children went outside on the large playground, tricycling, climbing, playing in a fort, and digging in the sand area.

On Fridays, the ECSE teacher meets with the staff from the two rooms to discuss classroom procedures, techniques for working with the children with special needs, and teaching strategies. She also closely coordinates with the School District speech therapist and occupational therapist who see many of the children during the week.

Assessment and Continuous Improvement. The teacher administered the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test to the program children at the beginning and end of the program year. Program staff also complete the Brigance Developmental Screening Test on each child as well as the Creative Curriculum Developmental Continuum Individual Child Profile three times during the year. Staff keep daily observations of individual children's progress in a large notebook.

Parenting Program. In September, the teacher met with each family to explain the program requirements and the various early childhood curricula. Teachers hold IEP meetings are held with the family for those children with special needs to determine their individual goals twice during the year. The teacher keeps in regular contact with parents through notes, letters, flyers, phone calls and at school pickup.

Nevada ECE families also participate in the many Lone Mountain Learning Center events, including the *Fall Festival*, the *Outdoor Thanksgiving Feast*, the *Dinner with Santa* and the *Spring Fling Carnival*. The Center also encourages all parents to participate in a "Make It and Take It" cooking activity held every third Thursday of the month.

Program staff also encourage parents to participate in the different CCSD parenting programs, including the *Nurturing Families*, *Family Storyteller*, and PBS literacy workshops. The teacher sends *Star* booklets home regularly with each child as well as Activity Backpacks that she sends home monthly. The teacher conducts parent conferences at the end of the year to discuss child progress.

Statewide Classroom on Wheels Program

The Classroom on Wheels Program operates three early childhood projects in Nevada: Clark County, Storey/Lyon Counties, and Washoe County with funds the program receives from a variety of sources. Classroom on Wheels also receives Nevada ECE funds which the program uses to support the provision of early childhood education activities at 13 separate locations or stops.

The Classroom on Wheels Program provides early childhood education services in converted school buses painted black and white to resemble Holstein cows. The buses become mobile preschool classrooms, equipped with educational materials, a computer and printer, and a bathroom. They are typically parked in front of elementary schools for a two hour session, from two to four days a week, often moving during the lunch break to a second school site.

In addition to the early childhood bus, the Classroom on Wheels Program in Clark and Washoe Counties also includes a second bus for adults where they can attend adult education and parenting education classes. The second bus supports the parenting education program required of all Nevada ECE projects.

The evaluator visited the Washoe County School District Classroom on Wheels project as representative of the Classroom on Wheels Program, and visited the bus that provided services at Echo Loder Elementary School and Fred W. Traner Middle School in Reno.

Statewide Classroom on Wheels: Washoe County School District

Location. The Classroom on Wheels bus parks at Echo Loder Elementary School in the morning and Fred W. Traner Middle School in the afternoon; both are in Reno, Nevada.

Intensity and Duration. This Classroom on Wheels program operates two sessions a day, four days a week, Monday through Thursday. The morning class is from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. at one school. The staff then drives the bus to the second school site, where the afternoon class operates from 12:30 to 3:00 p.m. This is thirty minutes longer than in previous years. Children receive ten hours per week of early childhood education.

Staff. A bilingual teacher and one aide work in the classroom.

Number of Children. The program serves 15 children in both morning and afternoon sessions for a child/adult ratio of approximately 7.5 to 1. Parents volunteer in the classroom on the day they provide snack.

Early Childhood Education Program

Curriculum. The Pre-Kindergarten program uses *Scholastic's Building Language for Literacy* as the primary early childhood curriculum. It is a research-based program with emphasis on helping children learn to read. The curriculum emphasizes oral language, phonological awareness, letter knowledge, and concepts of print. The teacher supplements the program with the *Ready, Set, Leap!* using the *LeapPad* and the *LeapSchool Desk* for literacy-based activities.

This teacher also uses strategies from the *ReggioEmilia Approach*, which involve extended projects based on children's interests and an in-depth system of documentation to "make the learning visible" for the children, teachers, and parents. In the *Reggio Emilia Approach* teachers are seen as researchers, always observing and documenting what the child is working on, and then facilitating the learning through carefully selected materials and provocative questions.

Almost all the children in the program are Hispanic. The teacher is Hispanic and speaks Spanish and English languages interchangeably during class. The class sings songs mostly in English but read books in Spanish first and then in English later in the session. At the time of the visit in late spring, the evaluator observed children speaking both English and Spanish among themselves during Center Time. Some children spoke only Spanish.

Learning Environment. The Classroom on Wheels bus is a mobile early childhood education classroom—equipped with folding panels that fold out into learning centers when the classroom is in session. The bus contains a child-sized bathroom facility but has no hot, running water. The COW bus contains unique, mini-learning centers (blocks, dramatic play, manipulatives, art, sand and water play, reading area, quiet area, and a computer area) geared to the developmental needs of the children. The learning centers contain a wide variety of learning materials considering the limited space on the bus (8 feet by 39 feet). When the weather is good, staff take easels, art materials, and the sand and water table outside in front of the school for expanded learning centers.

The last part of each session is spent outdoors. This year, the morning class uses the playground space at Echo Loder Elementary School and then walks to the Community Services Agency Head Start Program to use their well-developed early childhood-oriented playground with a tricycle trail and many tricycles, a large shaded multi-use climber, a sand box, and many outdoor toys (balls, bouncers, plastic trucks, shovels and pails, etc.) The afternoon class, located at Traner Middle School, does not have play equipment for young children. Instead, the teachers use either a grassy area located next to their bus or walk across a long field and through a passageway to a fenced kindergarten playground located at the adjacent elementary school. These outdoor areas raise some safety issues because cars drive directly by the COW bus to pick up middle school students with preschoolers close by.

Pedagogy. The class uses the *Reggio Emilia* philosophy of extended projects based on children's interests, of collaborative work in small groups, and of documenting children's work through their drawings and words. For example, the walls of the bus had several collaborative group murals of past activities. The teachers also made several classroom books which include the children's drawings and a re-telling of the story in their own words.

On the day of the visit, the theme was "*Spring*." Children talked about caterpillars turning into butterflies and seeds growing into flowers. During group time, the children did a fingerplay, sang a song about butterflies, and then read a book on the *Very Hungry Caterpillar*.

lar in Spanish first and then in English. The teacher then asked the children to retell the story in their words.

During Center Time, children made flower arrangements with artificial flowers, painted on easels, and played at the sensory table with sand, twigs, and plastic bugs at the back of the bus. In the middle of the bus, several children made large green construction paper leaves...cutting them out, then using the leaf as a base to add butterflies, caterpillars, food for the caterpillars. One teacher asked the child to tell about their creation and wrote their words on the leaf.

Assessment and Continuous Improvement. The staff administered the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test to all the children at the beginning of the year and at the end. Staff held parent workshops this year to train the parents to complete the Ages & Stages Questionnaire themselves. Staff also administered the Pre-K Portfolio Assessment developed by the WCSD Early Childhood Office to assess specific developmental areas and literacy awareness. The teacher keeps a file on each child that contains the assessments, drawing and writing samples, and documentation photos of activities in progress.

The teacher refers children to Child Find when appropriate. The teacher does not become involved in the IEP process for those children identified with special needs. In discussing the lack of the ECE teacher's involvement in the IEP process with the COW bus coordinator, the evaluator found that the school district ECE office encourages teachers to attend IEP meetings and will provide a substitute, if needed.

Parenting Program. Parents are involved in the program in several ways. They bring in snacks regularly and volunteer in the classroom on that day. (A mother and her younger son helped out in the morning session.) Parents are required to attend various workshops, offered in English and Spanish, in the *CALF* Resource Van which travels to their site during certain weeks in the school year. (See WCSD workshops above.) Parents are encouraged to check out materials from the *CALF* Van which includes a lending library of educational toys, child and adult books, preschool art materials, and craft kits.

The staff of this COW bus also offered monthly workshops, usually conducted in the school. The workshops covered *Nutrition, Dental Hygiene, Ages and Stages of Development, Behavior Management, Track to Kindergarten Homework Activities*, and the *Virtual Pre-K Program*.

Staff send out homework sheets every Thursday and expect the homework back the following week along with records of PACT time and reading times.

Douglas County School District

Location. Jacks Valley Elementary School, Minden, Nevada.

Intensity and Duration. Douglas County School District (DCSD) operates an afternoon pre-kindergarten class, Monday through Friday from 12:30 to 3:05 p.m. Children receive 12.5 hours per week of early childhood education.

Staff. A half-time early childhood teacher, a half-time special education teacher, and four half-time aides operate the program in a combined Early Childhood Education and Early Childhood Special Education class.

Number of Children. The program serves 20 children in the ECE Program and two in the ECSE Program with six adults for a child/adult ratio of about 4 to 1.

Early Childhood Education Program

Curriculum. The Pre-kindergarten Program at Jacks Valley uses *High Scope* as the primary early childhood curriculum, supplemented by the *California Early Literacy Learning (CELL)* program that the entire school uses. The teacher has also received training in *Parents as Teachers (PAT)* and uses its materials in Homework Bags.

Both *High Scope* and *CELL* are research-based and address different elements of the pre-kindergarten program. *High Scope* is an early childhood classroom model that covers all aspects of early childhood education. Children plan where they are going to work in Centers and then review their work at the end of Center time. The *CELL* program focuses on literacy skills, emphasizing skills to master alphabetic principles, phonemic

awareness, and concepts related to printed material. The *CELL* curriculum includes shared and independent reading, read-alouds, and interactive writing as well as various phonological activities.

Parents as Teachers (PAT) is a parenting program which includes parent packets designed to help parents understand the importance of their role as their child's primary teacher. Packets contain information on developmental areas and activities for the parent and child to do together.

The program serves eight English Language Learners who are Hispanic. The classroom contains numerous materials that reflect the Hispanic culture (e.g., dolls, books, etc.). In addition, one aide is Hispanic and speaks Spanish and translates materials, as needed.

Learning Environment. This is the third year of a combined classroom between the Pre-kindergarten Program and the Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) programs. This year there are two children from the ECSE program who join the ECE class for all activities, with assistance from their teacher and aide.

The Pre-K ECE teacher instructs a kindergarten class in the same room, so the classroom contains learning materials and projects from both classes. The learning centers include blocks, dramatic play, manipulatives, art, writing, language arts, music and a computer center geared toward the varying developmental needs of the children. The bathroom adjoins the classroom.

The school has developed a very large early childhood playground area with an extensive tricycle path surrounding a variety of age-appropriate climbing equipment, sand boxes, swings and picnic tables.

Perhaps in response to the description of this program in the 2004-05 evaluation report, the program now ends the day five minutes early before the rest of the school to accommodate the preschooler's safe transit to the school buses. Previously, the pre-kindergarten class was released at the same time as the rest of the elementary school at the end of the day.

Pedagogy. The classroom session includes large group and small group time, self-selected activity time and outdoor time, using the plan-do-review approach of *High Scope*. On the day of the visit, the class started their day in four small groups where children discussed what they planned to do during Center Time. The children then moved into Center Time, with the many adults guiding activities throughout the classroom. The classroom “hot topic,” or learning theme, was “*Things that grow underground.*”

One aide helped several children put together a large rubber alphabet puzzle on the floor while two other children put together a 50-piece frog puzzle. Another aide played *Candy Land* with several children; another aide talked with the children about various insects as the children played with plastic insects in the sand at the sensory table. The head teacher moved about the room, interacting with children individually and asking them questions about their current activity.

At the end of Center Time, the children cleaned up the centers and then lined up and went outside to the playground. The class spent 35 minutes running, climbing, riding tricycles, and playing with musical instruments the teacher had brought out.

Back in the classroom for Circle time, the teacher lead the group in an alphabet song and then sang *Five Little Monkeys* twice. The teacher then read a book and a poem with the children helping. After the large group, the children went back to their original four small groups where each teacher and aide read a book (all related to growing things...seeds, etc.) and then led different small group activities (e.g. painting of flowers, making of seed collages, making nature booklets, making torn construction paper art).

Assessment and Continuous Improvement. The children in the class were selected for the program based on their scores on the Brigance Screening. Out of the 100 children who had applied, the program selected the 20 lowest scoring children. Staff felt these children could most benefit from a preschool program. The teacher also administered the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and the Expressive One-Word Vocabulary Test in the fall and again in the spring. Staff also completed a newly developed teacher-made developmental assessment for four and five-year olds which they administered three times.

Parenting Program. Parents sign a contract and agree to take part in seven school events, some school wide, others preschool-oriented. The pre-k events included an orientation and get acquainted picnic, two Parent-Teacher Exchange Nights during which classroom activities were shared (e.g. making of play dough), a *Making Scarecrows Workshop*, a *Holiday Gift Making Workshop*, and a *Preschool Pizza Parlor Night*. Unfortunately, the teacher reported that attendance was lower than expected.

The teacher conducted two home visits, one at the beginning and one at the end of the year. The teacher asked parents to choose their own personal goals during the first home visit. Parents can volunteer in the classroom, bring snacks, or make classroom materials.

The teachers developed Homework Bags that staff send home weekly. The Homework Bags include a variety of activities, primarily literacy-based, for the parent and child to do together. The teacher also sends a weekly newsletter to parents, in English and Spanish, letting families know what the children are working on in the classroom.

Great Basin College Firefly Preschool Program

Location. Great Basin College, Mark H. Dawson Child and Family Center, Elko, Nevada.

Intensity and Duration. Great Basin College operates two half-day early childhood literacy classes on Monday through Thursday from 9:00 to 11:30 a.m. and from 1:00 to 3:30 p.m. Children receive 10 hours per week of early childhood education.

Staff. Program staff include a full-time teacher, four half-time aides (two per session), and various student interns.

Number of Children. The program serves 16 children per session with three adults for a child/teacher ratio of about 5 to 1, which is lower when student interns are present.

Early Childhood Education Program.

The Mark Dawson Child & Family Center received Accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) in 2005.

Curriculum. The Nevada ECE classroom follows a master curriculum plan outlined for all the Center's preschool classrooms. This Center has eight preschool classrooms with 141 children. The past Director and Preschool Coordinator developed a literacy-based curriculum, called *Light Up for Literacy*, drawing strategies and materials from several sources. This curriculum incorporates the *Creative Curriculum*, the *Self-Concept Curriculum*, and the *Anti Bias Curriculum*. The *Creative Curriculum*, is a research-based curriculum that emphasizes interactive learning in carefully designed learning centers, using the classroom environment as an effective teaching tool. The *Self-Concept Curriculum*, developed at the University of Nevada, Reno, focuses on the development of the child's self-concept with units that follow the development of the child in a natural, logical, and sequential process. This model places the child at the heart of the curriculum, focusing on experiences that will enhance the child's development and that are based on what is relevant to his or her life, such as family, school, and community. The *Anti-Bias Curriculum* promotes projects that emphasize acceptance, respect, and cooperation in the classroom and in the community.

The Child & Family Center operates as a lab school for college students enrolled in the Early Childhood Education and Nursing Programs at Great Basin College. Students receive college credit for practicum and student teaching coursework.

The teaching team carefully develops lesson plans incorporating the new Nevada Pre-Kindergarten Content Standards. All the classrooms at the Child and Family Center focus on general themes with theme-related books, videos, prop boxes for dramatic play and other resource materials available through their library; however, each class moves at its own pace, based on children's interest levels.

The Center has a large number of diversity-related materials, from books to puppets to flannel board stories. One aide speaks Spanish, assisting nine children learning English.

Learning Environment. The classroom contains exceptionally well-developed and well-equipped learning centers (blocks, dramatic play, manipulatives, art, writing, science, language arts, and computer centers) geared to the developmental needs of the children between three and five years old. Child-sized bathroom facilities are adjacent to the class-

room and shared with an adjoining classroom. The classroom also shares a kitchen with the classroom, allowing for many cooking activities.

The outdoor playground is very large and well equipped with two extensive multi-unit play stations and many other early childhood climbing units. The playground includes a large sand box with child-sized dump trucks and backhoes, a tricycle path with many tri-cycles and wagons, and an expansive grassy area with trees and picnic tables.

The Child and Family Center contains a Family Literacy Library with walls lined with early childhood books, flannel board stories, video materials, puppets, and dramatic play prop boxes. The Library contains over 3,000 items available for checkout. The Library contains large sofas, chairs and a rug. Staff encourage families to stay before and after class to read with their children, play with a puppet, or check out a book.

Pedagogy. The classroom schedule and activities allow for large group time, small group time, and a long self-selected activity time; for teacher-directed and child-choice activities; and for indoor and extensive outdoor activities. On the day of the visit, the central theme focused on the *Dinosaur World*. During Circle Time, the teachers involved the children in the *Dinosaur Romp*...with the children actively romping, stomping, shaking and growling like different dinosaurs.

The children then moved to centers, working on various activities related to the theme, making steaming volcanoes by mixing baking soda and vinegar together in sand structures and pretending to be paleontologists tracking down dinosaurs in the dramatic play area. Two boys read a book about dinosaurs to each other and two others played with blocks and small plastic dinosaurs. Each learning area contained books related to dinosaurs and volcanoes.

Staff use transition time from one activity time to another to introduce or reinforce specific information needed to prepare for kindergarten, such as children's names, telephone numbers, etc. For example, after a group circle time, the teacher asked children who were sitting on a drawing of a telephone their home phone numbers before going into the next activity.

Assessment and Continuous Improvement. The teacher administered the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and the Expressive One Word Picture Vocabulary Test to the children at the beginning and end of the school year. Staff also administered the Brigance Screening Inventory three times a year. In addition, the teacher uses a Preschool Portfolio Assessment based on the Nevada Preschool Standards which includes basic information about self and social and emotional development, language, early literacy and writing, mathematics, and physical development. This year, staff also completed a self assessment of the program using an NAEYC Checklist to renew their Accreditation Certificate.

The program served a large number of children on Individual Education Plans. The early interventionist and the speech therapist from the Elko County School District come regularly to work with these children.

Parenting Program. Program staff encourage parents to participate in the early childhood education program. Parents often visit and volunteer in the classroom and provide snacks for each session.

An important part of the parenting program is to involve parents in their child's learning at home. The program developed a "Homework on Wheels" Program. Once a month, children take home a lightweight, child-sized suitcase on wheels that contains a literacy activity and book for children to complete with their parents. As mentioned previously, staff encourage parents to check books out from the Family Literacy Library.

The school holds several Parent Nights, including *a Harvest Walk and Literacy Circle and Luncheon*, *A Ladies' Night Literacy Event (for Moms)*, *a Fellows' Night Literacy Event (for Dads)*, and *a "Buckaroo Breakfast"* during the Annual Elko Cowboy Poetry Festival. The teacher holds Parent/Teacher Conferences twice annually to review the child's progress and sends home a monthly newsletter in English and Spanish.

Humboldt County School District

Location. Grass Valley Elementary School, Winnemucca, Nevada.

Intensity and Duration. Humboldt County School District operates a morning and after-

noon pre-kindergarten class, Monday through Thursday from 8:35 to 11:15 a.m. and 12:15 to 2:55 p.m. Children receive 11 hours per week of early childhood education.

Staff. A full-time teacher and full-time aide operate the classroom. There is also a program coordinator who conducts parent involvement activities and tests the children. The coordinator is in the class half time and parents volunteer in the classroom often.

Number of Children. The program serves 20 children in the morning session and 20 children in the afternoon session for a child/adult ratio of 10 to 1: it is lower when the coordinator and/or parents are in the class.

Early Childhood Education Program

Curriculum. The Humboldt County Pre-Kindergarten program offers a literacy-based, family oriented program. This early childhood classroom previously used the *High Scope Program* as its early childhood education curriculum. This year, the new teacher and coordinator have not yet received training in the *High Scope* model. The assistant teacher who has been with the program since its inception has continued to introduce the *Zoo Phonics Program* to the children which introduces the alphabet through animal puppets and interactive activities.

Learning Environment. The Grass Valley Pre-K Program made many changes this year. The classroom is now located at the end of a hall of a new wing of the school. Bathroom facilities are adjacent. It is well organized and includes a language arts and listening center, an area for manipulative toys (puzzles, legos, games, etc.), a science area, a writing area, a puppet show space, a small dramatic play area, and a computer center, as well as a large plant growing unit with grow lights.

The program also still has use of their old classrooms in the mobile unit behind the school. They have adapted their schedule so they currently use the main classroom on Mondays and Wednesdays for more structured class time and literacy-oriented activities and the mobile classroom area for open activity, free choice time. Program staff used half of the space in the mobile unit for gross motor activities (tricycles, tumbling, etc.) and the other half for learning centers...art, easels and paints, blocks, dramatic play.

The program is developing a pre-kindergarten outdoor play area which will include a new multi-structure climber. The school plans to add an additional age appropriate apparatus and a fence to separate this playground from the area the older children use.

Pedagogy. The new teacher is a first year teacher with K-6th grade training. On the day of the visit, the class had an Easter Party. The class worked on three structured Easter-oriented craft activities: stringing together a necklace of pre-cut flowers and beads, putting together a construction paper chick coming out of an egg, and coloring a pre-cut paper Easter bunny to be shaped into an Easter basket. Several parents who attended the party helped at each table. At the end of these activities, children went to the various learning centers, with many using the listening center and the puppet area. Parents helped the children with puzzles and games. Later, the class visited the Bookmobile which makes a weekly visit, and listened as the Librarian read a book about cows.

When they returned from the Bookmobile, the teacher led the class in Circle Time. The teacher conducted calendar and weather activities, with the special child of the day, helping lead the class in counting off the days. The teacher then read another book to the children.

Children are very aware of the classroom routines. The class uses a behavior chart with clothespins with the children's names as a behavior management technique. The child's name is called when misbehaving and the clothespin moved down.

Assessment and Continuous Improvement. The program coordinator administered the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and the Expressive One-Word Vocabulary Test to all the children. Staff keep work sheets in the children's individual folders to show parents their progress.

The program serves children who have speech IEPs: they receive services from the School District speech therapist once a week for thirty minutes.

Parenting Program. The program coordinator implements the parenting program. Parents sign a contract that requires they be involved in the early childhood program six hours per month, including volunteering in the classroom once a month.

This year, the program no longer conducted regular home visits because the program did not hire family advocates. Instead, the program coordinator developed Literacy Backpacks which include the materials and descriptions of activities for the parent and child to do together. Families take the Backpack home twice a month.

Parents are also encouraged to attend monthly Parent Nights, conducted by community resources and staff, which have included *Communication Techniques*, *Making Home First Aid Kits*, *Dental Care*, *Drug Awareness* and *Parenting Wisely*. A monthly calendar is sent home to keep parents informed of school and classroom activities.

Pershing County School District

Location. Lovelock Elementary School, Lovelock, Nevada.

Intensity and Duration. The Pershing County School District Pre-kindergarten Program operates two half-day early childhood classes, Monday through Friday from 8:15 to 10:45 a.m. and from 12:10 to 2:40 p.m. Children receive about 12.5 hours per week of early childhood education.

Staff. Program staff include a full time teacher and two full-time teacher aides. The Pre-kindergarten program integrates daily with the Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Classroom, which has a full time teacher and three aides.

Number of Children. Both morning and afternoon sessions serve 18 children; the ECSE classroom serves 10 children. The integrated classroom, normally between 13-14 children, has a child/teacher ratio of around 4 to 1.

Early Childhood Education Program

The Pershing County Pre-kindergarten Program received accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children in 2005-06.

Curriculum. The Pershing County Pre-kindergarten Program uses *High Scope* as the primary curriculum. As described previously, *High Scope* is a research-based early childhood program in which children plan their activities, actively participate in learning cen-

ters, and complete the cycle by reviewing what they did during the day's session.

This year the class also uses the Pre-K portion of the *Houghton Mifflin Reading Program* which Lovelock Elementary School implements. The teacher uses the *Alpha Friends Big Book* each day to expose the children to the letters of the alphabet. This program emphasizes alphabet recognition, oral language and vocabulary development, and print awareness and beginning phonics.

Learning Environment. The Pershing Pre-kindergarten program is unique in that it provides an “inclusive” environment, combining children from the Nevada ECE classroom with the school district’s early childhood special education classroom daily. All the children from both classes spend time in each room and are engaged with staff from both programs. After the opening circle time, the children in each classroom are divided and spend the rest of the session in the other classroom. The outdoor play area is shared at the end of each session by both classes.

The two classrooms are adjacent to each other. Both classrooms are clean, well lit, well organized and equipped with child-sized tables and chairs. Child-sized bathroom facilities are adjacent to the classroom. Each classroom has several learning centers (blocks, dramatic play, manipulatives, art, writing, science, library and computers). This year, the school added play lofts in each classroom. Adaptive equipment is kept primarily in the ECSE room, but can be moved to the other classroom if needed.

The school expanded the outside playground area to accommodate the two early childhood classrooms. The playground includes a large, outdoor climbing apparatus, a sand box, tricycles, wagons, appropriate adaptive outdoor play equipment, and a narrow tricycle trail. The program plans to widen and expand the tricycle trail so it encircles the entire playground.

The learning centers contain a variety of learning materials appropriate for the wide age range and developmental levels of all the children, many of whom have special needs. Children in this program are between 3 and 5 years.

Staff use positive language and encourage positive conflict resolution techniques, using

the *High Scope* model as a guideline. Staff provide the children with many choices daily during the long open activity period and opportunity for collaborative planning and learning.

Pedagogy. The ECE teacher and the ECSE teacher plan their curricula together on Fridays, using IEP goals and daily observations of skill levels as guideposts. The two teachers conduct different but complementary activities for the two classrooms based on selected themes (e.g., farm life, weather, dinosaurs).

The program emphasizes literacy activities, incorporating many classroom writing experiences, teacher and child-made books, and poems. The child-made books include the children's own words, drawings, and photos. Children frequently read their own books. The children also visit the school library once a week and during a field trip to the Lovelock Community Library, all families obtained library cards.

On the day of the visit, the theme was "weather" with an emphasis on wind-related activities. At large group time, the teacher called out a number of children's names and they proceeded to the other classroom. Children from the other classroom now joined the circle and opening activities. Using both English and Spanish, the teacher involved the children in calendar activities and opening songs. A deaf interpreter stood beside the teacher and signed the words for several children.

In the ECE classroom, the teacher then asked each child where he/she planned to work and the child moved into active exploration of one of the learning centers: painting at the easel in the art area, building with blocks on the floor, playing with dinosaurs on a work table, reading books in the loft, etc. The teacher and aides worked with children at the various learning centers, individually and in small groups.

In the ECSE classroom, the theme was also weather and wind. Several children used a straw to blow paint across the paper. Other children played with building blocks or toys and several children worked on the computers. Some read books by themselves.

After the open activity time, the children in the ECE classroom came together and the teacher used a phone to have the children discuss with a make-believe person on the other

end of the line where they had worked. She closed circle time with a song, the children had their snack, and then worked in three small groups on specific activities: playing a weather-related game, reading a book, or making a windsock.

Assessment and Continuous Improvement. Staff administered the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test at the beginning of the year and will again at the end of the year. The school also administered the Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening Test to all children. The teachers kept observational notes based on the COR areas (Initiative, Social Relations, Creative Representation, Music and Movement, Language and Literacy, and Logic and Math) used in *High Scope*.

Parenting Program. The teachers require parents to sign a contract at the beginning of the program. In the contract, parents agree to complete one goal at home with their child, participate in the preschool program at least two hours per month, and attend any required trainings or meetings. Parents participate by volunteering in the classroom, providing a snack, and attending workshops presented by the school's family literacy staff. Parents are also encouraged to attend parent workshops conducted by the local Even Start or Head Start programs.

This year one of the teacher aides also acted as a Parent Advocate to assist parents in being more involved in the program. She is responsible for coordinating parent data from the weekly Parent Report Cards which ask parents to keep a record of what books they read to their child each day, to note the length of time they read to their children, and to record the activities and time spent together. The Parent Advocate has also made individualized Parent Packets which include various learning materials related to specific Parent Goals. In addition, staff encourage families to check out backpacks from their program available in both English and Spanish and books from the school's Literacy Center. The teacher sends out a monthly newsletter, in English and Spanish, which discusses the children's activities, planned field trips, trainings, etc.

Washoe County School District

Washoe County School District (WCSD) used Nevada ECE funds to initiate and expand early childhood education programs at nine sites. The nine sites represent two distinct models of providing early childhood education services to families: early literacy and high school early childhood center. The evaluator visited one site from each model.

Early Literacy Model. Located primarily at elementary schools, these projects typically serve children from the school's attendance area. The Nevada ECE program supported five early literacy project sites: Anderson, Booth, Incline, Johnson, and Veteran's Memorial Elementary Schools.

High School Early Childhood Center Model. These early childhood education projects are located at high schools. The high schools benefit by providing students in Child Development classes with a practicum to learn about early childhood education and Nevada ECE benefits by receiving extra assistance in the classroom with the children. The Nevada ECE program supported four high school early childhood education projects: Hug, Reed, Sparks, and Wooster High Schools.

All early childhood education programs in Washoe County School District use Scholastic's *Building Language for Literacy* as the primary early childhood curriculum. It is a research-based program on how children best learn to read. The curriculum emphasizes oral language, phonological awareness, letter knowledge, and concepts of print. Each teacher, then, supplements the program with many other commercial and self-developed materials.

In 2005-06, the Washoe County ECE program used the *Early Language and Literacy Childhood Observation Tool (ELLCO)* to assess the quality of early language and literacy environments and instruction.

The Washoe County School District Nevada ECE program developed district level activities in parenting education and staff development in which all ECE project sites could participate. In terms of parenting education, district ECE staff made available two parenting education activities to all ECE project sites.

- ***The COW Adult Learning Facility (CALF) Van.*** The CALF Van visits each early childhood program regularly during the year. It houses learning materials and books available for families to check out. This past year, in addition to Make-It and Take-It Workshops, the CALF Van offered three series of parent/child literacy workshops in both English and Spanish. The “*Ready to Learn Series*” (*Read, Do and View*), developed with the local PBS Station, consists of six workshops in which parents learn to view a television program with their child, read a follow-up book together, and then engage in an activity together. The *Family Storyteller Program*, offered in collaboration with the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension Office, consists of six workshops which teach parents how to read interactively with their child. The *Money on the Bookshelf Program*, also offered in collaboration with the Cooperative Extension, consists of four workshops designed to help parents teach their children money management skills through the reading of children’s books and related activities.
- ***Family Literacy Festivals.*** WCSD sponsored a School-District Winter Family Literacy Festival and an end of the school year Literacy Festival in which families and children participate in literacy activities at learning stations.

In terms of staff development, the WCSD central early childhood staff provided monthly trainings in early childhood related topics. In 2005-06, training included sessions on the *Nevada Pre-K Standards*, *Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-III* and the *Expressive One-Word Vocabulary Test*, *Team Building*, *Science*, *Cultural Sensitivity*, *Prop Stories*, *Assessing Through Observation*, *Portfolios Ages & Stages*, *Working in Small Groups*, *The Early Childhood Language and Literacy Classroom Observation Toolkit (ELLCO) Review*, *ECERS Review*, “*Look-Fors*” *Assessment*, *Workshop Ideas – “How to Make a Gingerbread House,”* and *Virtual Pre-K*.

The evaluator visited Veteran’s Memorial Elementary School as representative of an Early Literacy model and Sparks High School as representative of high school early childhood center model. Each is described briefly below.

Veteran’s Memorial Elementary School Preschool Program

Location. Veteran’s Memorial Elementary School, Reno, Nevada

Intensity and Duration. Veteran’s Memorial Elementary School Pre-kindergarten Program operates two half-day early childhood sessions, Monday through Thursday from

8:45 to 11:15 a.m. and 12:20 to 2:50 p.m. Children receive 10 hours per week of early childhood education.

Staff. A full-time teacher and a full-time bilingual aide operate the morning and afternoon programs. A student teacher from the University of Nevada, Reno, Early Childhood Department assisted in the classroom for each semester.

Number of Children. The program serves 16 children in the morning program and 17 children in the afternoon program with two adults for a child/adult ratio of approximately 8 to 1. The ratio is closer to 5 to 1, counting the student teacher.

Early Childhood Education Program

Curriculum. The class uses the Scholastic's *Building Language for Literacy* as the primary early childhood curriculum. It is a research-based program based on how children best learn to read. The curriculum emphasizes oral language, phonological awareness, letter knowledge, and concepts of print. The teacher also uses the *Reggio Emilia Approach* which is a program developed in Reggio Emilia, Italy and taught and modeled at the University of Nevada, Reno. The model emphasizes respecting children's inherent interests and competence, working on long term projects often based on children's ideas, and documentation of the children's ongoing learning via photos, the children's words, their works of art, etc. The teacher supplemented the curriculum with *VSA Start with the Arts Curriculum* which provides ideas for music and art activities as well as creative drama and dance.

Learning Environment. The Pre-Kindergarten class is located in a very small classroom in a back building of Veteran's School which becomes crowded when children are in learning centers. Next year, the class will be in a new modular classroom placed behind the school. The many learning centers include a language arts and puppet center adjacent to the listening center and computer, a combined home/store dramatic play space, a block area, a science shelf, an art table and sensory table, and a math/manipulative area. Bathrooms for the boys and girls are located off the room.

The early childhood program uses the older children's playground which is a considerable

walk, located in the front of the building. It does not contain early childhood playground equipment or fencing. The teacher brings out learning materials for activities.

The program provides services to primarily Hispanic, English Language Learners. The aide is bilingual and uses Spanish and English in the classroom and acts as the “bridge” for both families and the children at the beginning of the year. Both teachers celebrate and respect the two cultures in the class. The classroom contains books, songs, and videos in both English and Spanish.

Pedagogy. The classroom schedule allows for an extensive self-selected activity time, small group and large group time, and outdoor time. The schedule is posted and there are teacher-made books for the children with photos and simple drawings on both the daily schedule and on various routines (fire drills, outdoor play, classroom rules, etc.)

During center time, the children worked throughout the class...some in the dramatic play area playing store and others at the table drawing pictures of themselves and their family, and six children shredded newspaper and made a paper mache piñata.

During outside time, the staff brought out equipment and materials to augment the limited playground. The children made bright paintings on large paper taped to the building, played with plastic animals and pails and shovels in the dirt, and used jump ropes and Frisbees.

The teachers are attentive to the children’s needs, speak slowly and carefully, providing them with new words in English. Staff used positive reinforcement and redirection as guidance techniques.

Assessment and Continuous Improvement. The teacher completed the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test on all children and had the parents complete the Ages and Stages Questionnaire. The teacher also uses the Pre-Kindergarten Portfolio Assessment developed by the School District, which tracks skill development in various areas, including Language Arts, Book Handling/Concepts of Print, Math, Social/Emotional Development, and Personal Data.

The teacher maintains a portfolio for each child that contains work samples, art samples, photos, etc. The teacher shares these portfolios with parents at end-of-year conferences.

This program serves several children on IEPs who receive services from a School District speech therapist twice a week. The teacher has her degree in both Early Childhood Education and Early Childhood Special Education so she is well trained to work with both groups of children.

Parenting Program. The parents are required to sign an Adult Participation Contract where they agree to attend workshops conducted by the *CALF* Van and by the classroom teachers. Most parents attended the six-session *Family Storyteller Program* and the four workshops put on by the teachers... *Classroom Orientation Workshop, Music and Literacy Workshop, Homework Activities Workshop* and a new program called the *Virtual Pre-K Curriculum*. A number of parents volunteered in the classroom and other parents prepared snacks for the children.

The program sends home Activity Homework Packs once a week which includes journals, and specific activities for parents to complete with their child. The teacher keeps an ongoing record of PACT time and reading time by each family.

Sparks High School “Little Railroaders” Preschool Program

Location. Sparks High School, *Little Railroaders Preschool*, Sparks, Nevada.

Intensity and Duration. Sparks High School operates two half-day pre-kindergarten classes, Monday through Thursday from 8:30 to 11:00 a.m. and from 12:30 to 3:00 p.m. Children receive 10 hours per week of early childhood education.

Staff. A full-time teacher and full-time aide operate the morning program. In the afternoon, a Washoe County ECE special education teacher and her aide assist with six special education students, each alternating every other day. In addition, 50 high school students taking Child Development I and II classes at the high school assisted in the classroom, as their schedule allows.

Number of Children. The program serves 18 children per session for a child/adult ratio of 9 to 1 in the morning and 6 to 1 in the afternoon; it is lower when the child development students are present.

Early Childhood Education Program

Curriculum. The Pre-Kindergarten program uses *Scholastic's Building Language for Literacy* as the primary early childhood curriculum. It is a research-based program on how children best learn to read. The curriculum emphasizes oral language, phonological awareness, letter knowledge, and concepts of print. The teacher supplements *Language for Literacy* with the *Houghton Mifflin Pre-K Program*, which includes thematic kits and materials, and with many self-developed materials from her many years of teaching.

The program serves many English Language Learners, primarily Hispanic children as well as some children from other cultures (e.g., Hawaiian, Tongan). The teacher aide is Hispanic and frequently speaks Spanish in the class, assisting those children who need translation, and with the many families who speak Spanish only. The classroom contains many materials reflecting diverse cultures. Staff send all communications home to the families in English or Spanish, as needed.

Learning Environment. The classroom is located at the end of a wing of the high school with its own separate entrance for the pre-kindergarten families. Bathrooms are located across the hall. The program does not have a playground facility. They currently use a central courtyard area of concrete and planters. Here the teachers bring out water tables, balls, frisbees, jump ropes, hula hoops, etc, for activities. The program has purchased new playground equipment which will be installed in the outer area, adjacent to the new Sparks Community Learning Center.

The large classroom contains several well-equipped learning centers (science, blocks, dramatic play, manipulatives, art, writing, language arts, listening, woodworking, music, and computer centers). The classroom includes a new loft area housing a library, puppets, a doll house, and an enclosed housekeeping area.

Pedagogy. The teacher uses a theme-based approach, working on topics for a week or

longer. On the day of the visit, the theme was Nursery Rhymes, focusing on “The Old Woman in the Shoe.” During group time, the teacher repeated the rhyme with the children twice...then led the children in a shoe game, where they looked at their own shoes and counted how many fastened with laces, Velcro, or buckles.

The classroom schedule allows for a balance between teacher-directed and child-choice activities. On the day of the visit, during open activity time (children’s choice time) children were busy with their “*Old Woman and the Shoe*” activity (cutting, pasting, threading), playing a dice number game with a teacher, working on the computers, eating Noodle Soup, and writing and drawing in their journals. They moved from area to area taking their nametags with them and sticking them on the backs of their chairs. All staff engage the children in their “play” in the different learning centers, use positive language and redirection if needed, and are effective role models for the high school students.

The afternoon program serves children with special needs. An ECE special education teacher and aide individually assist in the classroom every other day. Together, the two teachers plan developmentally appropriate activities for these children, related to the class theme, that support the children’s IEP goals. A speech therapist works in the classroom two afternoons a week assisting the children with speech and language needs.

Assessment and Continuous Improvement. The teacher administered the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test to the children at the beginning and end of the year and conducts ongoing assessments of each child using the Pre-Kindergarten Portfolio Assessment developed by the WCSD ECE Office.

The teachers maintain a portfolio on each child that includes work samples of art, writing, etc., which staff give to the children’s next year kindergarten teachers. Program staff also develop an individual notebook for each child with work samples, homework sheets, photos, etc., which staff present to parents at the end of the year.

Parenting Program. Staff encourage parents to read with their children at home and have established a classroom library for parents to check out books and learning games. Parents are asked to keep monthly reading logs and the family receives a children’s book

when they return the log at the end of the month.

Staff held two parent workshops, teaching parents how to make games and providing them with ideas for PACT time. Program staff also required parents to attend at least one CALF Van workshop series, either *Family Storyteller*, *Read, View and Do*, or *Money on the Bookshelf*.

Staff sends home weekly “homework” for the children and their parents, using the *On Track for Kindergarten Program* and *STAR* booklets (*Sitting Together and Reading*).

White Pine County School District

Location. McGill Elementary School, McGill, Nevada.

Intensity and Duration. White Pine County School District operates a half-day early childhood program, Monday through Friday from 8:00 to 11:30 p.m. Children receive 17.5 hours per week of early childhood education.

Staff. Program staff include a half-time teacher, a half-time aide, and a Parent Outreach Coordinator who works in the classroom most days.

Number of Children. The program serves 20 children with two adults for a child/adult ratio of 10 to 1. When the Parent Outreach Coordinator is present, the ratio is 7 to 1.

Early Childhood Education Program

Curriculum. The White Pine County Pre-Kindergarten program uses both the *Core Knowledge Program-Preschool* and the *California Early Literacy Learning (CELL) Program* as the primary curricula. Both programs are also used by the other grades in McGill Elementary School. The *Core Knowledge Program* is based on research in cognitive psychology that supports the premise that children must learn a grade-by-grade core of common material to ensure a sound preschool and elementary school education. Therefore, the curriculum focuses on a set of fundamental competencies and specific knowledge appropriate for the age group. The competency areas include Movement, Oral Language, Autonomy/ Social Skills, Nursery Rhymes, Fingerplays and Songs, Storybook Reading

and Storytelling, Emerging Literacy Skills in Reading and Writing, and Mathematical Reasoning to name a few. The *CELL Program* includes a basic framework for daily literacy activities that includes oral language activities, phonological skills, reading aloud, shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, interactive writing, and independent writing.

Learning Environment. The White Pine County Pre-Kindergarten program contains several learning centers within two large, adjacent classrooms. One classroom is the “quiet room” and contains the language arts and library area, a writing area, and a computer center. The second classroom is the “active room” and contains blocks, dramatic play, manipulatives, art area, science area, pets and a theme oriented area based on what is currently being emphasized (e.g. bugs and insects).

To enhance classroom learning, the Pre-Kindergarten program uses the local town environment frequently for experiences, going on several field trips during the year. This year, the class made field trips to the hospital, a dentist’s office, the Railroad Museum and train station, a heavy equipment company, and the Future Farmer’s Fair. All the field trips become curricula for class-made stories, writing and art activities, wood and box constructions, and other projects.

The program uses two adjacent playground areas: a fenced-in smaller playground area developed exclusively for the Pre-K program, which community volunteers constructed. It contains a tricycle trail and a central gravel area with animal climbers and a beam walker. The lower, main playground used by the other elementary children has swings and a multi-use climber with slides, forts, etc.

Pedagogy. The classroom focuses on literacy and cognitive activities, offering the children many opportunities for hands-on exploration and verbal interaction. On the day of the visit, the children completed a unit on *Bugs and Insects* and started a unit on *Animals*. The teacher opened the first Circle Time with the active song, *Animal Action* with the children acting out various animal movements. They then sang about the days of the week, and heard a weather report from one of the children. They added to their weather graph on numbers of sunny days, cloudy days, rainy days and snowy days.

Later, during activity time, a number of children drew the life cycle of a caterpillar transforming into a butterfly with the help of the teacher. Other children painted at the easel, looked at plastic bugs with magnifiers in the Bug and Insect Center, or played matching games in the manipulative area with a teacher.

All staff are very positive, allow the children to settle their own problems, and use and reinforce the *I Care Language* approach included as part of the Core Curriculum.

Assessment and Continuous Improvement. The School District's speech therapist administered the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test and the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test at the beginning and end of the school year. Staff also complete the Brigance Developmental Inventory on all the children and a Core Knowledge assessment tool used with the curriculum.

The program serves special needs children with services being provided by the School District speech therapist and early childhood interventionist.

The teachers develop portfolios on all the children. They contain work samples, artwork, and assessment data and are given to the families at the end of the year.

Parenting Program. The Parent Outreach Coordinator is new this year and works directly with families to implement the parenting program. The Coordinator has developed several new forms to track monthly parent goals and involvement. She makes home visits with individual families or meets with them in the classroom once a month to review their goals for themselves and their child.

The parents sign a Home/School Involvement Compact in which the parents agree to volunteer in the classroom one day a month and participate in at least one family literacy night per year. They also agree to a monthly visit to monitor their goals. The Coordinator collects data on parent involvement, PACT time, and time parents spent reading with their children.

The Parent Outreach Coordinator also holds a monthly "Family Night" where she involves families in the reading of a book, learning a fingerplay and song, and making a

related craft. Some “Family Night” books have included the *Teddy Bear Picnic*, *Christmas Cookie Sprinkle*, *Snowmen*, *I Love You*, *Leprechauns*, and *Caterpillars*. Each month the Parent Coordinator also sends out homework bags with activities for the parent and child to do together.

Finally, the teacher holds *Family Literacy Nights* each Wednesday, helping parents select the appropriate books for this age and modeling how to read to young children. These *Nights* are held in the Family Resource Literacy Center that the pre-kindergarten staff developed two years ago.

Chapter VIII. Participant Outcomes

This chapter provides a summary of the effectiveness of Nevada ECE projects on the early childhood education and parenting outcome indicators. The outcome indicators were developed in June 2001 by the Nevada Even Start Statewide Family Literacy Initiative. The Nevada Department of Education played an important role in this process since the outcome indicators had to be used to evaluate federal funded Even Start projects in Nevada, which NDE administers.

The Nevada Even Start Statewide Family Literacy Initiative developed 14 outcome indicators: four in early childhood education, six in adult literacy, and four in parenting. After reviewing the Even Start outcome indicators, the Nevada ECE Evaluation Design Team selected four outcome indicators from Even Start consistent with Nevada ECE goals to evaluate the program: one indicator in early childhood education and three in parenting. The 2005-06 results show that Nevada ECE children and adults made positive gains and achieved the expected level of performance on all four outcome indicators.

Table 14. The Number of Outcome Indicators met by the Nevada ECE Program

Indicator Area (n)	Yes	No
A. Early Childhood (1)	1	0
B. Parenting (3)	3	0

As part of establishing the expected performance levels for the indicators, SB 525 directs the Department to review and “increase the expected performance rates on a yearly basis, based upon the performance results of the participants.” During 2005-06, the Department established a Task Force to review the expected performance levels of the four outcome indicators based on the results from previous years. After reviewing the data, the Task Force recommended that the expected performance level for one of the four outcome indicators be increased. The outcome indicator is the percent of first-year adults who increase the amount of time that they spend reading to or with their children. The original standard for this indicator was 30 percent. The Task Force recommended the standard be raised to “50 percent” in 2005-06 based on data from 2001-02 through 2004-05. (See Appendix C for a list of the four outcome indicators and how the performance levels were established.)

Outcome Indicators

A. Early Childhood Education

Outcome Indicator 1. *Seventy percent (70%) of Early Childhood Education children with a minimum of four months of participation will show improvement in auditory comprehension and expressive communication—*

- *as measured by a standard score increase on the Preschool Language Scale-4 (PLS-4) for children up to three years old.*
- *as measured by a standard score increase on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-III and the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test-2000 Edition for children from three to five years old.*¹⁷

Table 15. Performance on Early Childhood Outcome Indicators

Outcome Indicator	Expected	Actual
1. Auditory Comprehension (PPVT)	70%	79.1%
2. Expressive Comprehension (EOWPVT)	70%	86.0%

Preschool Language Scale-4 (PLS-4). Fourteen children were less than three years old when they enrolled in the Nevada ECE program; however, none of these children meet the criterion that they were in the program a minimum of four months. No data are reported for the PLS-4.

Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-III (PPVT). The PPVT is an individually administered norm-referenced test that measures receptive vocabulary (understanding/interpreting what is heard) and gives a quick estimate of the child's verbal and other literacy-related skills. The PPVT is appropriate for children between two and 18 years old. Nevada ECE programs administered the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test to children beginning at three years-old.

It can be administered in English or Spanish depending on the individual child. All ten Nevada ECE projects elected to administer the test in English only since school readiness, which includes English language proficiency, is a goal for the program. In the 10 Nevada ECE projects, project staff waited to test children who could not be tested in English at enrollment into the program because of limited English proficiency until he/she had suffi-

¹⁷ See Appendix B for a description of the PLS-4, PPVT, and the EOWPVT.

cient English skills. Projects reported that 207 of the 1019 children (20 percent) did not have sufficient English language proficiency to complete the PPVT in English when the children first enrolled in Nevada ECE. In addition, many other children who could complete the assessment were still English Language Learners.

The PPVT data are expressed in standard score units. PPVT scores have a standard score mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15. There is no “maturation effect” for the PPVT. Therefore, our expectation is that the PPVT standard scores should not change in the absence of a “treatment.” Thus, an increase in the standard score on the PPVT during the time a child is participating in Nevada ECE is taken as an indication that Nevada ECE is helping increase the child’s receptive vocabulary.

Nevada ECE projects served 702 children who had at least four months between the administration of their pretest and posttest. In terms of the expected level of performance on the PPVT, 555 of the 702 children (79 percent) made a standard score gain — above the expected performance level of 70 percent on this measure. Thus, Nevada ECE projects met the expected level of performance for this measure.

We calculated the mean gain scores on the PPVT to help interpret the overall impact of Nevada ECE on children’s receptive vocabulary. Table 16 shows that the 702 children made a mean gain of 8.7 standard score points on the PPVT. These results suggest that Nevada ECE projects had a positive effect on the receptive vocabulary of children in the program.

Table 16. Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test Mean Scores, n=702

Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Mean Gain
87.1	95.8	8.7

We also compared the gains of Nevada ECE children on the PPVT to the gains of children reported in the national evaluation of Even Start. The national study calculated monthly standard score gains for children who were administered the PPVT. Children in the national sample made a monthly gain of 0.94 standard score points.

Nevada ECE children were in the program (between the pretest and posttest) an average of 6.4 months. Based on the gains of Nevada children reported above, Nevada ECE children made an average monthly gain of 1.36 standard score points on the PPVT. In other words, Nevada ECE children made monthly gains in receptive vocabulary over a third larger than the monthly gains reported for children in the national Even Start evaluation.

The results, however, must be interpreted with caution because of the large numbers of English Language Learners in the program. As mentioned previously, projects could not administer the PPVT in English when the child enrolled into the program initially for 207 of the 1019 children (20 percent) for whom data were available. These children simply did not have sufficient English language skills to take the test. In these instances, Nevada ECE staff would wait to administer the early childhood assessment until the teacher thought the child had sufficient language skills.

In addition to those children who simply did not have sufficient English language skills to take the test at enrollment, many other children may have had enough English proficiency to take the test, but they were still learning the English language. As a result, the large gains on the PPVT are probably due to the impact of the early childhood program on the children's developmental skills as well as on helping many children learn English.

In an attempt to learn the effect of Nevada ECE on different groups of children, we divided the results from the PPVT into three different groups: children who did not have sufficient English language skills to take the PPVT at enrollment,¹⁸ children who had the

¹⁸ Project staff categorized these children as Limited English Proficient when they enrolled in the program and determined that these children did not have sufficient English proficiency to take the PLS-4 at enrollment. When categorizing children as Limited English Proficient, project staff used the federal definition of Limited English Proficient presented below.

The term limited English proficient, when used with respect to an individual means an individual –

- who is aged 3 through 21;
- who is enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary school or secondary school;
- who was not born in the United States whose language is other than English;
- who was born in the United States whose native language is a language other than English;
- who is Native American or Alaskan Native, or a native resident of the outlying areas and;
- who comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English language proficiency; or
- who is migratory, whose native language is a language other than English and who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant;

and

English skills to take the test at enrollment but were categorized as Limited English Proficient,¹⁹ and children who were English speaking and not identified as Limited English Proficient.²⁰

Table 17 shows the pretest and posttest means for the three groups on the PPVT and the percent of children that made a standard score gain. The results show that children in the three groups had different pretest means, as expected. The Limited English Proficient children who were unable to take the PPVT at enrollment had the lowest pretest mean, followed by Limited English Proficient children and able to take the PPVT at enrollment, and the English speaking children.

The results also show that students who were Limited English Proficient and not able to take the PPVT at enrollment made the largest mean standard score gain followed by the English speaking students and then the students who were Limited English Proficient and able to take the PPVT at enrollment. Finally, the results show that a smaller percent of the Limited English Proficient children who took the PPVT at enrollment made a standard score gain on the PPVT when compared to the other two groups.

Table 17. Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test Mean Scores and Gains

Group (n)	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Mean Gain	Percent Gain
No English Skills at Enrollment (111)	74.9	84.8	10.1	80.2 %
Limited English Skills at Enrollment (158)	82.1	89.7	7.6	74.1 %
English Speaking (433)	92.2	100.8	8.6	80.6%

-
- whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language may be sufficient to delay the individual
 - the ability to meet the State's proficient level of achievement on State assessment
 - the ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or
 - the opportunity to participate fully in society.

¹⁹ Project staff categorized these children as Limited English Proficient when they enrolled in the program and determined that these children had sufficient English proficiency to take the PLS-4 at enrollment.

²⁰ Project staff did not identify these children as Limited English Proficient at enrollment.

Even though there are slight differences among the three groups, the results suggest that all children benefited from the developmental activities in early childhood education program, regardless of English language proficiency.

Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test (EOWPVT). The EOWPVT is a standardized, norm-referenced test designed to assess an individual's English speaking vocabulary by asking the child to name objects, actions, and concepts depicted in illustrations. The age-range for the test is 2 years 0 months to 18 years 11 months. Like the PPVT, Nevada ECE projects administered the EOWPVT to children beginning at three years-old. The test contains 170 test items that begin relatively easy and become progressively more difficult. The starting point is staggered based on the child's age so that typically fewer than 50 items are given to any one child. The EOWPVT is widely used in early childhood and family literacy programs for evaluating progress.

Projects reported that 214 of the 977 children (22 percent) did not have sufficient English language proficiency to complete the EOWPVT in English when the children first enrolled in Nevada ECE. In addition, many other children who completed the assessment were still English Language Learners.

The EOWPVT data are expressed in standard score units. EOWPVT scores have a standard score mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15. Like the PPVT, our expectation is that the EOWPVT standard scores should not change in the absence of a "treatment."

Nevada ECE projects served 670 children who had at least four months between the administration of their pretest and posttest. In terms of the expected level of performance on the EOWPVT, 576 of the 670 children²¹ (86 percent) made a standard score gain on the EOWPVT—above the expected performance level of 70 percent on this measure for the outcome indicator.

21 The sample size of students who had pretest and posttest scores on the EOWPVT (n=670) is less than the sample size of students who had pretest and posttest scores on the PPVT (n=702) because it is more difficult for English Language Learners to obtain a score in the valid range on a test that measures expressive communication (EOWPVT) than receptive vocabulary (PPVT) in English.

As with the PPVT, we calculated the mean gain scores of the 670 children on the EOWPVT to help interpret the impact of Nevada ECE on children as shown in Table 18.

Table 18. Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test Mean Scores, n = 670

Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Mean Gain
83.5	94.8	11.3

Children made a mean gain of 11.3 standard score points. The EOWPVT was not used in the national evaluation of Even Start, so no national comparisons are possible. Instead, I calculated an “effect size” which researchers sometimes use to estimate the “value” of the gain.²² In this case, the effect size was medium—a standard deviation of 0.68 as compared to the effect of other social programs. This means that if Nevada ECE children were “typical” children at the time of the pretest, half of the population they were drawn from would have scored above the Nevada ECE pretest score and half would have scored below. However, by the posttest, only about 25 percent of the same population they were chosen from would have scored above the Nevada ECE children. Thus, the Nevada ECE program had a positive effect in improving the English skills of children in the program.

The results, however, must be interpreted with caution because of the large numbers of English Language Learners in the program. As mentioned previously, projects could not administer the EOWPVT in English when the child enrolled into the program for 214 of the 977 children (22 percent) for whom data were available. These children simply did not have sufficient English language skills to take the test. In these instances, Nevada ECE staff would wait to administer the early childhood assessment until the teacher thought the child had sufficient language skills.

²² Effect size is a type of standard score. It is found by dividing the difference between experimental and control group means divided by the standard deviation of the control group. In this instance, it is found by dividing the difference between the pretest and posttest means by the standard deviation of the pretest. It would then represent, in standard score terms, the superiority of the average person in the treated group over the untreated group. To help interpret the meaning of effect sizes: 1.0 is considered large, .5 considered medium, and .2 considered small.

In addition to those children who simply did not have sufficient English language skills to take the test at enrollment, many other children may have had enough English proficiency to take the test, but they were still learning the English language. As a result, the large gains on the EOWPVT are probably due to the impact of the early childhood program on the children's developmental skills as well as on helping many children learn the English language.

In an attempt to learn the effect of Nevada ECE on different groups of children, we divided the results from the EOWPVT into three different groups: children who did not have sufficient English language skills to take the EOWPVT at enrollment, children who had the English skills to take the EOWPVT at enrollment but were categorized as Limited English Proficient, and children who were English speaking and not identified as Limited English Proficient.

Table 19 shows the pretest and posttest means for the three groups on the EOWPVT and the percent of children that made a standard score gain. The results show that children in the three groups had different pretest means, as expected. The Limited English Proficient children who were unable to take the EOWPVT at enrollment had the lowest pretest mean, followed by Limited English Proficient children and able to take the EOWPVT at enrollment, and the English speaking children

Table 19. Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test Mean Scores and Gains

Group (n)	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Mean Gain	Percent Gain
No English Skills at Enrollment (93)	70.3	80.4	10.1	81.0
Limited English Skills at Enrollment (150)	74.7	85.8	11.1	85.3
English Speaking (427)	89.4	101.0	11.6	87.1

The results also show, in general, children with better English skills made slightly larger gains on the EOWPVT than children with fewer English skills. That is, children in the English speaking group not identified as Limited English Proficient had a slightly larger

mean gain and a slightly larger percent of children who made a standard score gain than children in the other two groups. This group was followed by children who were Limited English Proficient but able to take the PPVT at enrollment and then those children who could not take the test at enrollment.

Overall, when examining the results from the PPVT and the EOWPVT, there are only slight differences between the gains of the three groups of children. All children, regardless of English language proficiency, benefited substantially from the activities in early childhood education program whether the activities impacted the children's developmental skills or English language skills or both.

Nevada ECE children in Nevada met the expected performance level for this outcome indicator for early childhood education.

B. Parenting

Outcome Indicator 1. *Ninety percent (90%) of all participating adults enrolled in Early Childhood Education for at least four months will meet at least one goal related to parenting skills (e.g., developmental appropriateness, positive discipline, teaching and learning, care-giving environment) within the reporting year.*

Table 20. Performance on Parenting Outcome Indicators

Outcome Indicator	Expected	Actual
1. Individual Parenting Goals	90%	97.5%
2. Time With Children	60%	63.6%
3. Reading With Children	50%	72.4%

Individual Parenting Goals. Of the 1,128 Nevada ECE adults, 1,008 adults were enrolled in ECE projects for at least four months. Of the 1,008 adults, 983 adults (97.5 percent) met at least one parenting goal. Nevada ECE projects met the expected performance level of 90 percent for this indicator.

The evaluation also determined the number of adults who met at least one parenting goal, regardless if they met the criteria of being in the program for four months. Overall, the 1,128 adults (that established goals) set a total of 4,397 goals, making 3,847 of them (95.7 percent).

Outcome Indicator 2. *Sixty percent (60%) of first-year Early Childhood Education parents will increase the amount of time they spend with their children daily within a reporting year.*

Time With Children. Nevada ECE staff asked parents to estimate the number of hours they spent with their child each day when they enrolled in the program and again at the end of the evaluation period. Increasing the amount of time parents spend with their children is an important goal in parenting education. Parent and child together (PACT) time provides an opportunity for parents to become increasingly involved in their children's education, to increase their parenting skills, and to ultimately play a more important role in their child's learning.

Of the 1,125 children enrolled in Nevada ECE projects, 1,034 children were first-year participants. A total of 916 of these children were in Nevada ECE at least four months. Pretest and posttest data are available for 910 of the 916 children. At the time the 910 children enrolled in the program, 83 parents reported already spending more than two hours a day with their child (the highest possible time on the interview survey). I excluded these parents from the analysis since they were already at the highest possible time at enrollment and could not report a higher amount of time on the posttest. Of the remaining 827 parents, 526 (63.6 percent) reported spending more time with their children at the time of the posttest or when they exited the program, 169 parents (20 percent) reported spending the same amount of time with their children, and 132 (16 percent) reported spending less time with their children. Thus, Nevada ECE projects met the expected performance level of 60 percent.

Outcome Indicator 3. *Fifty percent (50%) of first-year Early Childhood Education parents will increase the amount of time they spend reading with their children within a reporting year.*

Reading With Children. An even more specific Nevada ECE goal is to increase the amount of time adults spend reading to or with their children. Reading together has many benefits. It provides parents with an opportunity to become more involved in their child's education and increases the child's readiness for school.

Nevada ECE staff asked parents to estimate the number of hours each week they spent

reading with or to their children when they enrolled in the program and again at the end of the program year. As mentioned previously, there were 916 first-year children enrolled in Nevada ECE projects who were in the program at least four months. Pretest and posttest data were available for 913 of the 916 children. Of the 913 children, 661 (72.4 percent) of their parents reported spending more time reading with them at the end of the evaluation than when they began the program, 106 parents (11.6 percent) reported spending the same amount of time reading with their children, and 146 parents (16.0 percent) reported a decrease in the amount of time they spent reading to their children. Nevada ECE projects exceeded the expected performance level of 50 percent for this outcome indicator.

Although the outcome indicator focuses on first-year parents, I think it is important to note the amount of time that parents of all 1,125 children report spend reading with their children. Pretest and posttest data were available on 1,003 children who were enrolled in the program at least four months. Table 21 shows that ECE parents spent an average of 0.9 more hours (54 minutes) per week reading to or with their child (a gain of 69 percent) at the end of the evaluation period.

Table 21. Parent and Child Reading Time Together, n=1,003

Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Mean Gain
1.3	2.2	0.9

Chapter IX. Testimonials

The impact of social and educational programs is sometimes difficult to measure because of the imprecise assessment instruments in these areas. This is especially true for early childhood assessments. In order to provide a more complete picture of the impact of Nevada ECE on families, we asked two projects to collect and submit testimonials from their participating families. We asked that, if possible, the participating adult write the testimonial. Project staff were to help only if necessary, such as with translation. While anecdotal, testimonials can be a powerful medium to convey the impact of a program on the lives of participants, which is sometimes missed by standardized assessment instruments.

Raymond—Participating Adult

Raymond is a 28 year-old Hispanic married father with one daughter in the program. His daughter, Alyssa, is four years old and attends the Carson City School District (CCSD) Early Childhood Education program.



Raymond enrolled in the Early Childhood Education program to better prepare his child for school and to improve his daughter's chance of future success in school. He attended 10 hours of parenting education. Alyssa attended over 280 hours of early childhood education.

To Whom it May Concern:

Thank you for giving my child Alyssa the opportunity to participate in your Pre-K program. It proved to be an invaluable learning experience for her. Alyssa learned how to spell her name, group similar objects, recognize and sound out the alphabet, and became familiarized with the calendar among many other things. Alyssa also greatly improved her social skills as a direct result of her participation in your Pre-K program. Alyssa thoroughly enjoyed being in your program and participating in the recitals. She has now started kindergarten and has a solid foundation to build from thanks to your program. I will definitely be recommending your program to other parents. Thanks you and your staff so much.

Sincerely,

Raymond

Denise—Participating Adult

Denise and Cody are married and the parents of Kyson who attends the White Pine County School District Early Childhood Education program. Kyson is four years old.

Denise enrolled in the Early Childhood Education program to better prepare Kyson for school and to improve her son's chance of future success in school. Denise attended 27 hours of parenting education and Kyson attended almost 430 hours of early childhood education.

To Whom it May Concern:

We write this letter to let you know the outstanding job the McGill Preschool did with our son Kyson.

Kyson began attending the preschool in August 2005 at 4 years old. At that time we could not see him being ready for kindergarten in one year. The teachers at McGill were not only able to teach him his sounds, letters, numbers, and basic kindergarten skills, but also helped him to be socially ready for kindergarten.

The McGill Preschool kept us informed of concepts we could work on at home with Kyson and kept us very involved in his learning process. In one short year our son went from being a very young preschooler to a kid ready for kindergarten. Without the great staff and the McGill Preschool program, Kyson's development would be behind schedule.

The McGill Preschool made all the difference in the world. We would be happy to tell you more if you would like to call us at home.





Sincerely,









Denise and Cody.

Chapter X. Conclusions and Recommendations

The 2005-06 school year is the fifth year of the Nevada Early Childhood Education Program. This evaluation report presents data on participant characteristics (e.g., age, ethnicity, family structure), project operations (e.g., staffing, intensity of services offered) as well as ratings of the services provided by Nevada ECE projects based on program delivery indicators of effective early childhood programs and data on child and adult outcomes.

The two overall conclusions about the 2005-06 Nevada ECE program are: Nevada ECE projects have improved the quality of their early childhood programs since 2001-02 when the Nevada ECE program began and Nevada ECE projects have positively impacted program participants in early childhood development and parenting skills. Other conclusions and key statements about the Nevada ECE program include—

-  Nevada ECE projects have implemented higher quality early childhood programs from 2001-02 to 2005-06 based on increases in the average ratings of 16 of 17 program delivery indicators of effective early childhood programs. In addition, the overall quality of the early childhood education programs increased slightly from 2004-05 to 2005-06 based on an increase in the average ratings for 14 of the 17 program delivery indicators. Only one indicator decreased due primarily to one project which had a new teacher who had not yet been trained on the early childhood education model used in the classroom. The ratings of the other two indicators remained the same.
-  All Nevada ECE projects are helping to improve adult's parenting skills and children's language development and school readiness skills. Nevada ECE projects showed gains on all child and adult measures and exceeded the expected performance levels on all four statewide outcome indicators used for family literacy programs.
-  Nevada ECE children, including children learning the English language, are more likely to succeed in kindergarten because of their participation in the program.
-  Projects recruited many families who were in need and could benefit from the Nevada ECE program. Many families had multiple economic and social disadvantages (e.g., limited educational experience, limited English proficiency). At enrollment, most Nevada ECE children started below their peers on a measure of school readiness.

-  For many families, Nevada ECE was the only structured opportunity to better prepare their children for school. Most children from Nevada ECE families did not participate in any preschool or toddler program before Nevada ECE and many Nevada ECE children did not participate in any other program while in Nevada ECE.
-  The vast majority of children would have stayed at home with their parents, grandparents, siblings, or other family member for all or part of the time if they did not participate in Nevada ECE.
-  The majority of early childhood education teachers (86 percent) meet new state requirements for teaching pre-kindergarten children. The teachers who do not meet the criteria of the new state requirements were ‘grandfathered in’ due to their previous experience and employment in existing early childhood programs. Of the qualified teachers, most (94 percent) have an early childhood education certificate or endorsement.
-  The average cost for providing the Nevada Early Childhood Education Program in 2005-06 was \$3,116 per child. This per child cost underestimates the total per child cost for providing an early childhood education program to children since the calculation does not include the monies from all the funding streams that support Nevada ECE project sites.
-  Projects offered services in early childhood education of sufficient intensity and duration, which if attended regularly, would positively impact Nevada ECE children.
-  Most children attended services in early childhood education at a level which could show positive benefits of the services they received. However, some children who were enrolled in the program long enough, did not attend services frequently enough to benefit substantially from them.
-  Most parents attended Nevada ECE parenting education services regularly enough to benefit. However, some parents were not in the program long enough or did not attend services frequently enough to benefit substantially from them.
-  Projects retained 84 percent of families enrolled in Nevada ECE during 2005-06 until the end of the school year, slightly less than the 87 percent who completed the program in both the 2003-04 and 2004-05 school years.

Although Nevada ECE projects have established sound early childhood education programs, Nevada ECE projects can still improve the services they provide to families. Below are four recommendations for improvement.

1. Continue to adopt, implement, and provide training to staff in high-quality, research-based early childhood programs and practices. Train all staff in Nevada Pre-

kindergarten Content Standards.

2. Monitor children's attendance in the early childhood education program and develop policies to replace those children who are unable to attend frequently with children who are more likely to attend.
3. Whenever possible, ensure early childhood classrooms have or have use of an outdoor playground with equipment for pre-kindergarten children to provide an outdoor curriculum that improves gross motor development.
4. In classes that are predominantly English Language Learners, research and implement practices that are a good fit with program and children characteristics to facilitate the learning of English.

The Nevada Department of Education can help projects meet their goals by considering three recommendations.

1. Continue to locate and provide technical assistance and training in high-quality early childhood education programs and practices, including information and training in the Nevada Pre-kindergarten Content Standards.
2. Continue to monitor project activities to ensure high-quality early childhood education projects based on the 17 program delivery indicators for effective early childhood education programs.
3. Continue to work with projects to improve services in the 17 program delivery indicators by having projects develop improvement plans for those indicators in which projects were rated low.
4. Continue to monitor data collection for the statewide evaluation.

APPENDIX A

Senate Bill 525, Section 14— Nevada Early Childhood Education

Sec. 14.

1. The Department of Education shall transfer from the State Distributive School Account the following sums for early childhood education:
 For the Fiscal Year 2005-2006..... \$3,032,172
 For the Fiscal Year 2006-2007..... \$3,152,479
2. The money transferred by subsection 1 must be used by the Department of Education for competitive state grants to school districts and community-based organizations for early childhood education programs.
3. To receive a grant of money pursuant to subsection 2, school districts and community-based organizations must submit a comprehensive plan to the Department of Education that includes, without limitation:
 - (a) A detailed description of the proposed early childhood education program;
 - (b) A description of the manner in which the money will be used, which must supplement and not replace the money that would otherwise be expended for early childhood education programs; and
 - (c) A plan for the longitudinal evaluation of the program to determine the effectiveness of the program on the academic achievement of children who participate in the program.
4. A school district or community-based organization that receives a grant of money shall:
 - (a) Use the money to initiate or expand prekindergarten educational programs that meet the criteria set forth in the publication of the Department of Education, entitled "August 2000 Public Support for Prekindergarten Education for School Readiness in Nevada."
 - (b) Use the money to supplement and not replace the money that the school district or community-based organization would otherwise expend for early childhood educational programs, as described in this section.
 - (c) Use the money to pay for the salaries and other items directly related to the instruction of pupils in the classroom.
 - d) Submit a longitudinal evaluation of the program in accordance with the plan submitted pursuant to paragraph (c) of subsection 3. The money must not be used to remodel classrooms or facilities or for playground equipment.
5. The Department of Education shall develop statewide performance and outcome indicators to measure the effectiveness of the early childhood education programs for which grants of money were awarded pursuant to this section. In developing the indi-

cators, the Department shall establish minimum performance levels and increase the expected performance rates on a yearly basis, based upon the performance results of the participants. The indicators must include, without limitation:

- (a) Longitudinal measures of the developmental progress of children before and after their completion of the program;
 - (b) Longitudinal measures of parental involvement in the program before and after completion of the program; and
 - (c) The percentage of participants who drop out of the program before completion.
6. The Department of Education shall review the evaluations of the early childhood education programs submitted by each school district and community-based organization pursuant to paragraph (d) of subsection 4 and prepare a compilation of the evaluations for inclusion in the report submitted pursuant to subsection 7.
7. The Department of Education shall, on an annual basis, provide a written report to the Governor, Legislative Committee on Education and the Legislative Bureau of Educational Accountability and Program Evaluation regarding the effectiveness of the early childhood programs for which grants of money were received. The report must include, without limitation:
- (a) The number of grants awarded;
 - (b) An identification of each school district and community based organization that received a grant of money and the amount of each grant awarded;
 - (c) For each school district and community-based organization that received a grant of money:
 - (1) The number of children who received services through a program funded by the grant for each year that the program received funding from the State for early childhood programs; and
 - (2) The average per child expenditure for the program for each year the program received funding from the State for early childhood educational programs;
 - (d) A compilation of the evaluations reviewed pursuant to subsection 6 that includes, without limitation:
 - (1) A longitudinal comparison of the data showing the effectiveness of the different programs; and
 - (2) A description of the programs in this State that are the most effective;
 - (e) Based upon the performance of children in the program on established performance and outcome indicators, a description of revised performance and outcome indicators, including any revised minimum performance levels and performance rates; and

(f) Any recommendations for legislation.

8. The sums transferred by subsection 1 are available for either fiscal year. Any remaining balance of those sums must not be committed for expenditure after June 30, 2007, and must be reverted to the State Distributive School Account on or before September 21, 2007.

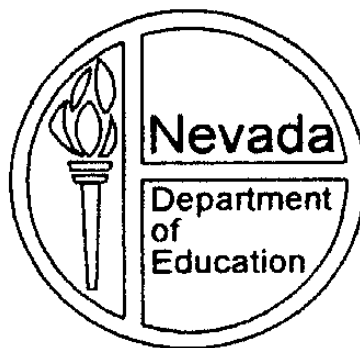
APPENDIX B

Site Visitation Form

Senate Bill 525— Nevada Early Childhood Education

Site Visitation Form

Using Nevada Early Childhood Education Program Delivery Indicators



NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Special Education, Elementary and Secondary Education, and School Improvement

700 East Fifth Street
Carson City, NV 89701

Prepared by
PACIFIC RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

April 2004

Project Information *(Location, number of children, intensity and duration)*

Early Childhood Staff *(Number of staff [ECE and non-ECE], staff education, staff certification, staff experience in education)*

Parenting Program *(Description of parenting activities to include the types of activities, duration/intensity of the program, and the curriculum used, if any)*

Early Childhood Program.

The program enhances development and eases children's transition to school by providing developmentally appropriate programs for all children from the families enrolled in home or center-based literacy programs.

Curricular Base.	Not Descriptive					Very Descriptive				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
<p>1. Program has a curricular base for all age groups served by the program. Early childhood curriculum has a research base. Staff make use of curricular philosophy when planning activities for individual children.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Philosophy of curricular base for program is provided to parents and staff Curricular base is well founded and grounded in known research Lesson plans show evidence of curricular base in use Staff have received training consistent with curricular base 	Notes:									
Diversity.	Not Descriptive					Very Descriptive				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
<p>2. The curriculum respects and supports individual, cultural, and linguistic diversity. The curriculum provides a balance between learning about majority and minority cultures. Curriculum accommodates children who have limited English proficiency. All of the cultures and primary languages of the children are respected in the curriculum.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learning materials show evidence of individual, cultural, and linguistic diversity (e.g., books, dolls, block accessories, etc.) Activities reflect awareness of individual, cultural and linguistic diversity All children are welcome in the program, including children with special needs and children with cultural and linguistic diversity Staff are reflective of cultural diversity of classroom 	Notes:									

Early Childhood Program—cont.					
Developmental Areas.	Not Descriptive		Very Descriptive		
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>3. Early childhood program balances attention to all areas of development – social, emotional, physical, cultural, cognitive, aesthetic, and language.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom learning centers and activities reflect developmentally appropriate practices • Lesson plans reflect awareness of need to meet children’s varying developmental needs • Lesson plans include all areas of development 	Notes:				
Experiences.	Not Descriptive		Very Descriptive		
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>4. Staff encourage direct, firsthand, interactive learning experiences. Staff recognize that children develop knowledge and skills through active experiences and social interactions. The real world is the subject of learning activities. Activities are integrated and interdisciplinary, building on children’s interests and knowledge.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning experiences are developmentally appropriate to age group • Learning experiences are a balance between active/quiet, group/individual, teacher-directed/child-directed, indoors/outdoors • Learning experiences are concrete, hands-on, and interactive • Learning experiences enable children the opportunity to make meaningful choices and provide a substantial block of time for children to explore and investigate • Learning experiences reflect the community in which the children live as well as the children’s own interests and existing knowledge 	Notes:				

Early Childhood Program—cont.					
Environment.	Not Descriptive		Very Descriptive		
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>5. The physical environment is safe, clean, well-lighted, comfortable, and age-appropriate in terms of furniture, equipment, materials, and access to bathrooms and clean-up facilities.</p> <p>Evidence—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom is clean, orderly, and well-lighted • Furniture is age-appropriate and safe • Fire drill procedures are posted • Room arrangement allows children to play and interact safely • Outdoor environment is clean, safe and equipped with age-appropriate apparatus • Bathroom and clean-up facilities are clean and convenient 	Notes:				
Learning Environment.	Not Descriptive		Very Descriptive		
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>6. The learning environment reflects the children's interests and displays varied and culturally rich materials. Classrooms contain a wide variety of materials accessible to all children, including books, math manipulatives, art supplies, dramatic play props, and science areas. The outdoor area is safe and contains appropriate equipment to encourage development.</p> <p>Evidence—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom contains age-appropriate learning materials accessible to all children and reflective of children's interests and cultural and individual diversity • Classroom contains learning centers which include language arts materials (e.g., books, puppets, flannel board stories, etc.), blocks, math manipulatives, art supplies, dramatic play props, science materials, musical instruments • Outdoor equipment and learning materials are safe, and age-appropriate 	Notes:				

Early Childhood Program—cont.					
Interaction.	Not Descriptive			Very Descriptive	
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>7. The adult-child ratio and group size allow for frequent interaction between children and adults. Adult-child ratios are consistent with licensing standards. Children have sustained relationships with primary teachers/caregivers.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group size and ratio of teachers to children are limited to enable individualized and age-appropriate programming (<i>NAEYC Guidelines</i>) • Three year-olds are in groups of no more than 16 children with 2 adults • Four year-olds are in groups of no more than 20 children with 2 adults • Five year-olds are in groups of no more than 25 children with 2 adults • Multi-age grouping and children remaining with teacher for more than one year are strategies considered to build sustained relationships • Teachers create a nurturing, caring environment by showing respect for children in their daily interactions (e.g., using respectful and inclusive language, getting down at children's level, showing signs of affection and genuine caring) 	Notes:				

Early Childhood Program—cont.					
<i>Children with Special Needs.</i>	Not Descriptive		Very Descriptive		
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>8. A wide variety of learning experiences, materials and equipment, and instructional adaptations and accommodations are used for children with special needs.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptive materials are available and used, if needed • Accommodations for individual needs are incorporated into learning experiences, if needed • Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are implemented, if required • Therapeutic or other services are conducted within the classroom, if needed and appropriate 	Notes:				
<i>Behavior Management.</i>	Not Descriptive		Very Descriptive		
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>9. Staff use positive guidance techniques for discipline.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers model, encourage and reinforce the behavior that is desired • Teachers use redirection of children to more acceptable activities • Teachers set clear and realistic limits • Teachers intervene to enforce consequences for unacceptable, harmful behavior • Teachers encourage children to verbalize their feelings, wants and needs 	Notes:				

Early Childhood Program—cont.						
Language.	Not Descriptive					Very Descriptive
	1	2	3	4	5	
<p>10. The environment is language-rich. During contact time, children are read to regularly. Books and other reading material are abundant. Songs, rhymes, and stories are common activities. Staff demonstrate many ways to encourage children to talk about their experiences and to represent their ideas in stories and pictures.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Books and other reading materials are abundant • Songs, rhymes and stories are part of daily program • Classroom charts and signs in print are in evidence • Children are read to every day in various contexts (e.g., large groups, small groups, in laps) • Staff use various questioning techniques to get children to talk about what they are doing, thinking, and feeling • Materials (paper, pencils, glue, etc.,) are available for children to represent their ideas and experiences in stories and pictures 	Notes:					

Early Childhood Program—cont.					
Problem Solving.	Not Descriptive		Very Descriptive		
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>11. Staff encourage development of reasoning and problem-solving by providing challenging learning experiences and encouraging children's development through skillful questioning and expanding activities.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers use open-ended questions, pose problems, make suggestions and add complexity to tasks Teachers use many opportunities for children to plan, think about, reflect on, and revisit their own experiences Teachers engage children in discussion and representation activities (e.g., dictating writing, drawing, painting, clay) Teachers provide many opportunities for children to learn to work collaboratively with others and to learn how to solve problems cooperatively 	Notes:				
Child-Centered.	Not Descriptive		Very Descriptive		
	1	2	3	4	5
<p>12. Program staff provide many opportunities for child-selected learning and children are aware of basic routines. Children's play is respected by staff as legitimate learning time.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily schedule is posted for all to read Daily schedule includes large time block for free choice/child-selected activities Children are aware of routines and participate in activities which reinforce daily schedule (e.g., use of calendar, weather chart, group discussion of day's activities, etc.) 	Notes:				

Early Childhood Program—cont.						
Developmental Approach.	Not Descriptive					Very Descriptive
	1	2	3	4	5	
<p>13. Program staff have appropriate expectations for children and provide activities based on their individual developmental needs. Staff provide opportunities for all children to succeed.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program staff have been trained in early childhood growth and development and diversity • Learning activities are age appropriate and reflect both group needs and individual needs • Staff have appropriate expectations for children from different age groups • Classroom environment is one of positive respect and concern for each child 	Notes:					

Early Childhood Program—cont.						
Initial Assessment.	Not Descriptive					Very Descriptive
	1	2	3	4	5	
<p>14. Staff use a variety of formal and informal assessment techniques to measure domains of learning and development. The results are used in guiding curriculum development, teaching to meet the development needs of children, and assisting in determining if further early intervention measures are necessary.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children’s initial assessments are available for review (e.g., PLS-4, Brigance, DDST, teacher observations, etc.) • Procedures for further assessment of potential delays, if indicated, are established and followed (e.g., use of Child Find, etc.) • Decisions that have a major impact on an individual child are based on multiple sources of information, including data from parents, teachers and specialists • Staff discuss and use results from initial assessments to plan individual and group activities 	Notes:					
Measure Progress.	Not Descriptive					Very Descriptive
	1	2	3	4	5	
<p>15. Staff use a variety of formal and informal assessment procedures on an ongoing basis, including observation, performance assessment, work samples, and interviews so that the results reflect children’s progress.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers keep files with children’s work samples, performance assessments, etc. • Children’s ongoing assessments are available for review (e.g., Teacher observations, work samples, interviews, performance assessments, etc.) • On-going assessments are planned and purposeful • Staff discuss and use results from on-going assessments to plan individual and group activities 	Notes:					

Early Childhood Program—cont.						
Parents.	Not Descriptive					Very Descriptive
	1	2	3	4	5	
<p>16. Parents are active partners in their child's education process and have the opportunity to provide input in their child's readiness for participation in various activities and their progress.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher's keep Parent Involvement Form which records activities parents are involved in and duration/intensity • Teachers communicate (verbal or written) to parents they are always welcome to visit program • Parents are encouraged to participate in the program in a wide variety of ways (e.g., attending parent workshops, participating in home visits, volunteering in the classroom, attending parent conferences, etc) • Teachers keep record of parent activities at school and of parent/child activities together at home • Teachers create opportunities for appropriate parent and child interactions during the program 	Notes:					

Early Childhood Program—cont.						
Reading Readiness.	Not Descriptive					Very Descriptive
	1	2	3	4	5	
<p>17. Parents and caregivers regularly read with children, encouraging them to ask questions and to become actively involved in the reading experience. Shared literacy activities also include discussions around books, letters, and word sounds.</p> <p><i>Evidence—</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers keep records of parent involvement with their child in reading and literacy activities at home (e.g., goals can include reading with child at least 30 minutes a day, taking child to public library at least two times a month, establishing a weekly time where all family members read for 60 minutes, etc.) Teachers keep records of parents frequency of reading at home with child Teachers show parents how to read to and with their children 	Notes:					

APPENDIX C

Project Ratings on ECE Program Delivery Indicators, 2005-06

Table 22. Project Ratings on Early Childhood Education Indicators, (1=low, 5=high)

Early Childhood Education Indicators	Carson City	Churchill	Douglas	Clark			Great Basin
				C.O.W.	Lone Mt.	Mc-Williams	
Curricular Base	5	5	5	5	5	4	5
Diversity	5	4	5	5	5	5	5
Developmental areas	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Experiences	5	5	5	4	4	5	5
Environment	5	4	5	3	5	4	5
Learning Environment	5	4	4	4	4	4	5
Interaction	5	5	5	5	5	4	5
Children with Special Needs	4	4	5	4	5	4	5
Behavior Management	4	4	5	5	5	4	5
Language	5	4	5	4	4	5	5
Problem Solving	5	5	4	4	4	4	4
Child Centered	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Developmental Approach	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Initial Assessment	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Measure Progress	5	5	5	5	5	4	5
Parents	5	5	4	5	5	4	5
Reading Readiness	5	5	5	5	5	5	5

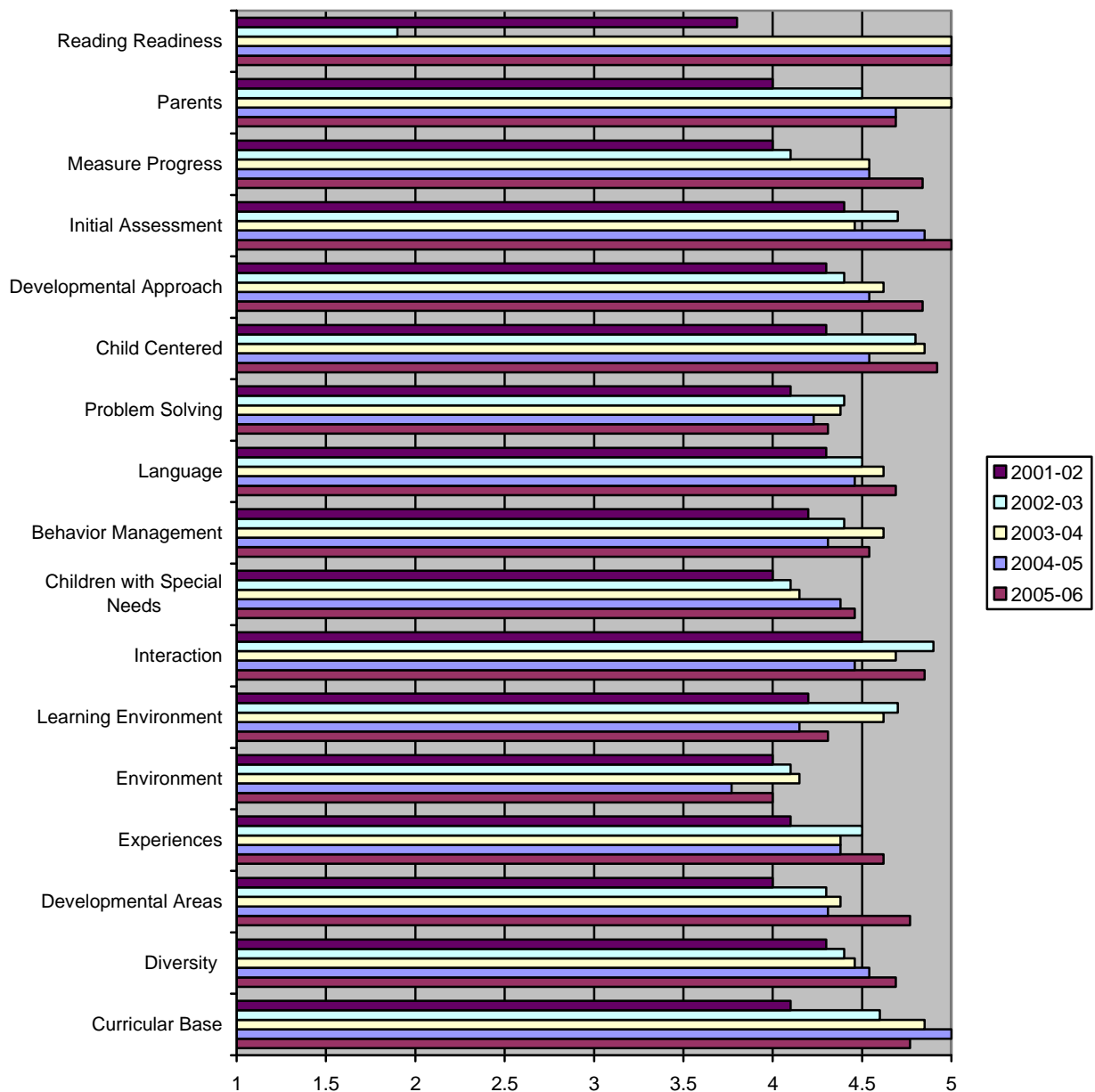
Table 22. Project Ratings on Early Childhood Education Indicators, (1=low, 5=high)

Early Childhood Education Indicators	Humboldt	Pershing	Statewide COW	White Pine	Washoe		Average Rating
					Veterans	Sparks High	
Curricular Base	3	5	5	5	5	5	4.8
Diversity	4	4	5	4	5	5	4.7
Developmental areas	4	5	4	4	5	5	4.8
Experiences	4	4	5	5	4	5	4.6
Environment	4	4	3	4	3	3	4.0
Learning Environment	5	5	4	4	3	5	4.3
Interaction	4	5	5	5	5	5	4.8
Children with Special Needs	4	4	4	5	5	5	4.5
Behavior Management	3	5	4	5	5	5	4.5
Language	4	5	5	5	5	5	4.7
Problem Solving	4	4	5	4	5	4	4.3
Child Centered	4	5	5	5	5	5	4.9
Developmental Approach	3	5	5	5	5	5	4.8
Initial Assessment	5	5	5	5	5	5	5.0
Measure Progress	4	5	5	5	5	5	4.8
Parents	4	4	5	5	5	5	4.7
Reading Readiness	5	5	5	5	5	5	5.0

APPENDIX D

Summary Ratings on ECE Program Delivery Indicators, 2001-02 through 2005-06

Figure 16. Nevada ECE Program Ratings on ECE Indicators (1=low, 5=high)²³



²³ The evaluator visited 10 project sites in 2001-02, 14 project sites in 2002-03, and 13 project sites in the last three years: 2003-04, 2004-05, and 2005-06. Seven of the project sites are the same for all five years; 11 project sites are the same for 2002-03, 2003-04, 2004-05, and 2005-06; and 12 project sites are the same for 2003-04, 2004-05, and 2005-06; and 12 project sites are the same for 2004-05, and 2005-06.

APPENDIX E

Additional Information on Nevada Early Childhood Education Program Outcome Indicators

A. Early Childhood Education

Improvement in Ability to Read on Grade Level or Reading Readiness.

Outcome Indicator 1. *Seventy percent (70%) of Early Childhood Education children with a minimum of four months of participation will show improvement in auditory comprehension and expressive communication—*

- ♦ *as measured by a standard score increase on the Preschool Language Scale-4 (PLS-4) for children up to three years old.*
- ♦ *as measured by a standard score increase on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-III and the Expressive One-Word Picture Vocabulary Test-2000 Edition for children from three to five years old.*

Performance Level. The standard of “70 percent” is based on data for state funded Even Start children from birth through two and one-half years of age on the PLS-3 during 1999-2000. Seventy-three percent of Even Start children made a standard score point gain from the pretest to posttest on auditory comprehensive and 65 percent on expressive communication.

Project Data Collection. Early Childhood Education projects are expected to administer the PLS-3 to children receiving Early Childhood Education services from birth through three years old or the PPVT and the EOWPVT to children from three to five years old when they enter the program and again at the end of the program year, or when the children exit the program.

Project Reporting. Early Childhood Education projects are expected to provide a list of all children from birth to five years old who received Early Childhood Education services for at least four months. The list should contain the children’s names and a pretest and posttest score on the PLS-4, PPVT, or EOWPVT.

B. Parenting Education

Parenting Skills.

Indicator 1. *Ninety percent (90%) of participating adults enrolled in Early Childhood Education for at least four months will meet at least one goal related to parenting skills (e.g., developmental appropriateness, positive discipline, teaching and learning, caregiving environment) within the reporting year.*

Performance Level. Data have not been collected on this performance indicator previously nor are parenting goals established consistently across projects to estimate a reasonable performance level. In the absence of evaluation data, the standard of “90 percent” was determined through discussion with experienced Even Start project directors who thought the expectation was reasonable.

Project Data Collection. Early Childhood Education projects are expected to help parents establish annual goals for themselves in parenting (e.g., attending monthly parenting workshops, learning positive discipline techniques, attending six Family Storyteller workshops) and criteria for determining whether the goals are met.

Project Reporting. Early Childhood Education projects are expected to provide a list of all Nevada ECE parents, the number of parenting goals the parents established for the year, and the number that they met.

Parent and Child Together Time (PACT).

Indicator 2. Sixty percent (60%) of first-year Early Childhood Education parents will increase the amount of time they spend with their children weekly within a reporting year.

Performance Level. The standard of “60 percent” is based on data for state funded Even Start parents during 1999-2000. Sixty-two percent of first-year Even Start adults increased the amount of time they spent with their children weekly from when they entered the program to the end of the reporting year, or when they exited the program.

Project Data Collection. Early Childhood Education projects are expected to administer a survey when a family enters the program and again at the end of the program year or when the family exits the program. Local project staff need only administer a posttest survey to parents who have been in the program a minimum of four months.

Project Reporting. Early Childhood Education projects are expected to provide a list of all children who received Early Childhood Education services. The list should contain the children’s names, the amount of time the parent spent with the child when they entered the program and again at the end of the program year, or when they exited the program.

Parents and Children Reading Together.

Indicator 3. Fifty percent (50%) of first-year Early Childhood Education parents will increase the amount of time they spend reading with their children within a reporting year.

Performance Level. The original standard for this indicator was 30 percent. The standard was raised to “50 percent” in 2005-06 based on data from Nevada ECE Projects from 2001-02 to 2004-05. During the four years, 47 percent to 70 percent of Nevada ECE first-year adults increased the amount of time they spent reading to or with their children from when they entered the program to the end of the reporting year, or when they exited the program.

Project Data Collection. Early Childhood Education projects are expected to administer a survey when a family enters the program and again at the end of the program year, or when the family exits the program. Local project staff need only administer a posttest survey to parents who have been in the program a minimum of four months.

Project Reporting. Early Childhood Education projects are expected to provide a list of all children who received Early Childhood Education services. The list should contain the children's names, the amount of time the parent spent reading to or with the child when they entered the program and again at the end of the program year, or when they exited the program.